
L O U I S A.

1012A

LOUISA

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

MELISSA AND MARCIA,

OR,

THE SISTERS.

VOLUME II.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. HOOKHAM, NEW BOND-STREET.

1790.



IN THE
Lane Fund

BY THE AUTHOR OF

MELISSA AND MARCI

OF

THE SISTERS

W

FOR THE

FOR DON

PRINTED BY THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1922

LOUISA.

CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. Raby was prevented from making any observation on Louisa's little narrative, by the entrance of a servant, with a message to the latter from Doctor Sandolph, to inform her that he was just arrived in Portman-square. This agreeable intelligence dispelled the sadness which the retrospect of past events had diffused over her mind; and full of glad impatience, she hastened to meet her venerable friend.

A thousand tender enquiries relative to his health and welfare, rapidly followed each other; and with the eagerness of youth, she sought in his countenance, for more speedy answers than his tongue could utter. As for him, he stood silent, viewing her with a degree of delight and approbation, such as a fond parent would have felt.

Lady Roseville was out; consequently no interruption was given to an interview, which had long been desired by both parties. After the first hurry of their spirits had subsided into a pleasant

calm, Doctor Sandolph discreetly, but with friendly anxiety, enquired of Louisa, how she liked her situation. Though this question was expected, and that she had determined to answer it unreservedly, still it embarrassed her; her eyes were involuntarily cast down; but on his repeating his enquiry with increased earnestness, she summoned courage to relate faithfully all that had passed; not without blushing at the unamiable character truth obliged her to give of her mother; and hastening from a subject so repugnant to her delicacy, she mentioned her wish of relieving Lady Roseville's pecuniary distresses; submitting likewise to his consideration, by whose counsels she was determined to abide, whether she could with any degree of propriety, continue to live with her.

Doctor Sandolph looked perplexed, "'Tis," said he, "a delicate matter to know what to advise in your situation; for, however regardless Lady Roseville may be of her character, it would be an ungracious act in *us* to expose it, which would be the certain effect of a hasty removal. Could I indeed, pursue the late Lady Roseville's plan, and offer you an eligible asylum at my house, your mother, conscious of her own misconduct, could make no reasonable objection to your accepting it, and such reasons might be assigned for this measure, as would preclude any unfavourable censure

sure being passed upon her. But I confess, I see very strong objections, to your entire residence with me; excuse my explaining them at present. I need not say, they do not arise from my own feelings; how much they would be gratified by having you under my roof, words cannot express!

I have a sister; with her you might be without impropriety;—but she lives secluded from the world, in a remote part of England; her style of living, and—to confess the truth, her temper, are not such, as to render her society desirable. Therefore for the present, I shall only endeavour to draw Lady Roseville out of town; possibly I may prevail upon her to come and visit my personage; this, will for some time keep that Sir Ralph Random at a distance; perhaps by my representations, she may be persuaded to break this connection; upon that condition, I will myself undertake to settle her affairs, and will advance the money necessary; for as for you, my dear child, you must upon no account contract debts. When you come of age, you shall repay me at your leisure.”

“ But, my dear, Sir,” cried Louisa, “ in case I die in the interim, how then——”

“ Pshaw, pshaw; I will have it my own way; should I suffer a pecuniary loss by such a calamity as your untimely death, the greater misfortune would entirely swallow up the lesser. But to re-

turn to our subject. When once I get Lady Roseville into the country, I shall have an opportunity of studying the best method of working upon a disposition, with which I have hitherto sought little acquaintance; and, should I unfortunately find it impenetrable to any good principle, I shall seriously consider what measures must be taken; for however loth I should be to mortify her, my child's honour and happiness, will ever be my first consideration."

Louisa gratefully acknowledged his goodness, and he proceeded thus:—

"The character you give me of Lord Pom-poufton, sufficiently justifies your dislike of him; but think me not impertinently curious, if I ask, whether your dislike to one object, is not a little strengthened, by your partiality to some other?"

Louisa blushed. "I will not," said she, after a little hesitation, "dissemble with you. If Lord Danefield were at liberty to offer me his hand, I—I should——"

"Well, you need not distress yourself to add more; yet, my dear child, do not let this partiality strengthen by self indulgence. Much misery would be prevented, if young persons did not suffer themselves to be deluded by their imaginations. 'Tis true, Lord Danefield bears an excellent character; I believe that he is amiable, and
deserving

deserving of your esteem ; but let not my Louisa give him, what he cannot return, if he listens to the suggestions of prudence, or what ought to have still more force, if he remembers the injunctions of a dying parent.

The lady destined for him, is in every respect a suitable connection ; he ought to be very certain, before he foregoes such an advantageous alliance, that the sentiments he feels for any other woman, are well founded, and not a boyish romantic fancy that will shortly fade away, and leave in its room very serious regret, for the sacrifice it occasioned. Be not mortified, my dear Louisa, at my supposing such a thing possible ; when you have lived longer in the world, you will find that little stress is to be made on any attachment, that has not stood the test of time ; and that neither beauty, sense, nor merit, are always sufficient, to fix the wandering inclinations of man."

Lady Roseville's entrance put a period to this conversation ; she saluted the Doctor very coldly, and appeared chagrined to see him. He feigned not to observe this, but drew her into conversation, relative to her plans for the summer ;—she coolly said, she had formed none ; upon which, he invited her into Shropshire pressing her to honour his niece and him with a visit, when he returned thither, which he said, would be in about a fort-

night. But his proposal was haughtily declined, and she likewise peremptorily refused to permit Louisa to accompany him.

Piqued at Lady Roseville's rude denial, and too proud to press her further, the good old man retired, meditating on the measures he should take, in regard to his ward. Scarcely was he gone, when Lady Dashaway entered Lady Roseville's drawing-room. "What do you think?" cried Lady Roseville; "I have had an old country parson here, plaguing me to death to leave town, now that it is at the height of its gaiety, and go truly to visit his parsonage! Did you ever hear any thing so absurd?"

"If the invitation came from Doctor Sandolph," answered Lady Dashaway, "and I conclude it did, for I met him this moment, I cannot think it so. I have some little acquaintance with him, having often met him at the Duke of L——'s house, whose relation he is. His parsonage is the prettiest spot imaginable; it stands in the Duke's park; but he is little at home, being as you may have heard, a great rambler; however, when he is England, the Duke is always delighted, if he can detain him at the castle."

"Really! well I never knew he was a man of such consequence; indeed, I know mighty little of him, and was much surprized to find him nominated to be my daughter's guardian."

"Did

“ Did you ever see Lord William S———?”
asked Lady Dashaway.

“ Never.”

“ He has not appeared much in public, since his return from abroad ; you know, I suppose, that Doctor Sandolph travelled with him. He is a delightful young man, will probably be the Duke’s heir, who has no children of his own, and has long been parted from his wife.”

Lady Roseville, who had lent an attentive ear to this account of Lord William S—, now asked a thousand questions concerning him ; and began to repent her rejection of Doctor Sandolph’s invitation. Lord William S. young, handsome, and heir to a Dukedom, would be a much more splendid alliance, than even Lord Pompouston’s.—The idea of the latter, might sleep for the present. Nothing more probable, than that Lord William might take a fancy to Louisa ; nothing so favourable to love, as the social intimacy of a country life. Louisa certainly would not thwart her wishes in this point, as she had done in regard to the Irish Lord. Who knows, but that the old Doctor himself had this scheme in his head, though he is too cunning avow it ; and here, by her own folly, she had affronted him, whom it was her interest to court ! Such were her cogitations after Lady Dashaway’s departure ; and to remedy the past, her chief solicitude.

Louisa, who had not been present during Lady Dashaway's visit, could not account for the sudden change she perceived in her mother's sentiments towards her guardian. She was agreeably surprized at being desired to write a note to the *good* Doctor, (for so he was now denominated) to invite him to dinner the day following.

The invitation was accepted: both that, and the very gracious reception he met with, were matter of astonishment to him, nor could he help being disgusted with the capriciousness of her disposition. Her late haughty demeanour, was now converted into smiles; and she endeavoured to assume a meek and gentle air, which however she could not attain. Her attentions towards her guest, were carried to an excess that became teasing. He was prohibited one side of the room, on account of an opening door, which might give him cold; the light was almost excluded, that the glare might not be offensive to his eyes; this dish was recommended; and that was removed further, that he might not be tempted to taste things hurtful to the gout: in short, she seemed to have no other view than to gain his favour; why she should be so solicitous to do this, he could not imagine; but he soon discovered that she had entirely dismissed her objections to a country jaunt, and though he was secretly rejoiced, he resolved not to appear

too eager for her visit. He returned therefore very laconic replies, to her enquiries relative to the time of his departure from town, to the situation of his house, and to his connection, with the Duke of L——'s family.

Lady Roseville disconcerted, that the Doctor would not understand an hint, and apprehensive he did not mean to renew an invitation, which she had with such little ceremony rejected, found, that to obtain her end, she must (awkward as it was) be more explicit.

After hemming once or twice, she said, she had considered of his kind proposal of going to Stretly; that at first view, some difficulties had appeared, which on reflection, had diminished. Her refusal had been occasioned, partly from an apprehension of being troublesome to him, and partly on account of business of her own, which she thought might have detained her in town. But that every selfish consideration must give way to her desire of promoting her dear Louisa's welfare, whose health, seemed to require a little change of air, the heat of London beginning already to incommode her; therefore could she be sure a visit from them would be no sort of inconvenience to him, she should pay it with great pleasure.

His answer was framed, conformably to the plan he had laid down, of receiving her advances.

rather coolly. He said, that he had not expected the obstacles she had opposed but the preceeding day to his request, would so speedily have vanished ; that if her Ladyship's business would admit of delay, and that if she could put up with such accommodations as his humble roof afforded, he should be glad to see her: but that at all events, as Louisa had certainly no business that could detain her in town, and as the least hint of her health being affected by close air, was sufficient to alarm him, he should in this case, exert a guardian's authority, and (turning towards his fair ward with a smile) *command* her to accompany him to Stretly.

No part of the mortification, Doctor Sandolph intended bestowing on Lady Roseville, escaped her ; but accustomed to dissemble, she listened to him with a placid smile, and said, that she herself, as well as her daughter, should in this instance be happy to receive such agreeable commands ; nor would she let him depart, till he had fixed on that day fortnight, for this much-desired journey.

Louisa was charmed with this plan, and the more so, as her friend Mrs. Raby was to go into the country about the same time ; therefore, except some secret pangs relative to Lord Danefield, she had nothing to regret in town.

Doctor Sandolph, having thus settled what he had much at heart, his next care was in pursuance

of Louisa's wishes to see Bangrove, and it was not without much difficulty, and several useless meetings, that he could obtain from this man of business, (whose delight was to procrastinate) a list of Lady Roseville's debts. He was greatly shocked to find their amount was very considerable, and to hear from Bangrove, that he was not certain that he knew the whole; which was already above 4000*l.* as every day a fresh creditor started up.

Doctor Sandolph, though not rich, could procure about half the sum, which he cheerfully advanced to Louisa; but refused positively to take her bond for it. This 2000*l.* Louisa desired might be equally divided among the creditors; and Bangrove prevailed upon them, to be content for the present, with receiving one half of their demands, in consideration of a promise he gave them, in the name of Miss Roseville, of paying the remainder as soon as she came of age. While this business was transacting, Doctor Sandolph avoided mentioning it to Lady Roseville; it was a delicate subject to discuss with a woman of her disposition, who might presume from his easy compliance with his ward's request, that henceforth she might contract debts with impunity, leaving the payment of them to her; nor did he wish her to know, that any part of the money had been advanced by himself. He imagined (and the event

Proved that he was right) that Lady Roseville would be satisfied at hearing, through Bangrove, that her affairs were adjusted, without giving herself much concern to know how; to enter into business of any sort, being very repugnant to her inclinations.

| But as he saw many specimens of her extravagance, and rage for play, during his short abode in town, these matters he reserved for his strictures, together with some serious remonstrances on her connection with Sir Ralph Random, (which was openly spoken of in the world) when he should get her into Shropshire.

Sir Ralph heard of this intended journey with much displeasure; his chagrin at parting with Lady Roseville, was less apparent, than his anger at her having projected it, without previously consulting him. But his influence (which hitherto had been unbounded) failed, when he attempted to exert it, in opposition to her ruling passion. Love, in her breast, was subordinate to ambition; and, despairing of gratifying this passion by any accession of grandeur or dignity to herself, her hopes rested on what might be reflected from her daughter. Yet wishing to avoid a rupture with Sir Ralph, she left no art untried to sooth him into good humour; but his gloomy disposition resisting all her blandishments, their farewell, was as cold and sullen.

as that between Louisa, and her friend Emily, was warm and tender.

The sentiment that united them, was founded on a basis that could not moulder away. Nought but the semblance of friendship, which originates in caprice, and is maintained by a participation of vice and folly, is effaced by the touch of time, or shrinks away at the approach of misery.

Lady Roseville's coach conveyed herself, Louisa, Mrs. Lacely, and Doctor Sandolph, to Stretly; where the two former were received by his niece, with different degrees of civility, according to the impression she took of each.

Miss Sandolph was a little thin lively woman, of about forty; plain in her person, but with a countenance sharp and sensible, and endowed with no small share of activity, both of mind and body.

Lady Roseville immediately felt afraid of her; but Louisa, who had no cause to apprehend her penetration, neither by flattery attempted to gain her favour, nor damped by cold reserve, the advances she made towards an intimacy.

Though Lady Dashaway had removed in any of Lady Roseville's objections to visiting Stretly, she was surprized (because she had not expected it) to find elegance, as well as convenience, in a parsonage.

It

It was placed in a retired, but beautiful part of the Duke of L—'s park, separated from it only by a sunk fence, in which was concealed a gate, of which the Doctor had a key. The back front faced a small pleasure ground, beyond which lay the road, not near enough to incommode, but sufficiently so to enliven. A thick and flourishing plantation served as a screen to the stables, offices, and kitchen garden. The house had no pretensions to show or splendour, but it was very comfortable, and elegantly clean and neat. The parlour boasted of no ornaments, but what it derived from Miss Sandolph's skill and ingenuity; her pencil had with beautiful drawings covered its walls; her needle had scattered roses on its chairs and sofa; and even the pier table, and chimney piece, though composed only of arbele, by their bright polish, agreeably deceived the eye, with the semblance of curious inlaid woods, and foreign china.

Lady Roseville pretended to admire all she saw; but her incessant exclamations of, "charming! charming!" and "vastly pretty!" did not impress Miss Sandolph with any opinion of her taste; for she already justly discriminated the affectation of her character, from the amiable simplicity of Louisa's, whose approbation was chiefly marked by an intelligent

telligent countenance, and a close and silent attention to all that was shewn her.

Three days had now passed, since the ladies' arrival at Stretley; and they had not, to Lady Roseville's great mortification, yet seen the inhabitants of the castle; she had walked about the park, and round the plantations, with unceasing perseverance, 'till her fatigued legs refused their office; but her hopes of meeting some of the family, had constantly been disappointed; and now the only prospect that supported her spirits was, that she should meet them at church on the Sunday following. To prepare for this event, was her employment the whole preceding Saturday; and Louisa, with regret, found herself debarred by her mother's command, of her walk on a charming summer's evening, lest the damp should take out the curl of her hair.

During the short time that Doctor Sandolph had passed in town, he had noticed so many *outré* figures, that though his eye had become almost accustomed to them, he could not help being struck with Lady Roseville's, when she made her first appearance on Sunday morning, just as the family were finishing their breakfast.

Her high turbanned hat, shaded with an enormous plume of feathers, her hair waving in ringlets down her back; her pink lustring jacket

and white petticoat, and her handkerchief puffed out half a yard before her, seemed, in his opinion, little suited to her age, and to the place where they were to be exhibited. But what principally offended him was, the liberal use she had made of both *rouge* and white. For some moments he contented himself, with fixing his eyes upon her with a meaning that she could not mistake; but at last, unable to contain himself; “for the love of God, Madam,” said he earnestly, “do not expose yourself, by venturing to church that figure! I apprehend you will set the whole congregation in an uproar.”

“Lord bless me!” cried she, “what can you mean? Surely I am dressed just like other people.”

“May be so, when you are in town; but here, in the country, we have very old fashioned notions; and believe me, Madam, a more decent appearance would better suit the solemnity of the house of God.”

Lady Roseville haughtily desired him to forbear sermonizing, ’till he ascended the pulpit; and much affronted, sullenly swallowed her breakfast.

The Doctor finding his admonitions so ill received, remained silent, exceedingly vexed to be obliged to usher such a figure into his church; but Miss Sandolph, who had no small spice of ill nature

nature in her composition, secretly enjoyed the idea of Lady Roseville's appearing ridiculous.

The way to church was through a part of the Duke's plantations, not wide enough to admit a carriage; and as the wind was very high, Lady Roseville had the mortification to feel every instant as she walked along, that part of her powder was escaping, and the structure of her hair deranging. Ruffled before by the Doctor's censure, she arrived at church, heated and discomposed. While Louisa, who had nothing to disturb the serenity of her mind, appeared in her simple attire, void of art or design, and as lovely as innocent.

They had not long been seated, before two ladies and a gentleman entered a gallery in view, which Miss Sandolph, in a whisper, announced to be the Duke, his sister Lady Caroline S. and Mrs. Saunders, a lady who lived with them.

Lady Roseville, disappointed at Lord William's absence, mumbled over her prayers inattentively, trying however to cheer her spirits with thinking, how much the Duke and his party would be struck with her fashionable appearance; and when the service was over, she lingered behind, that she might contrive to go out of the church at the same time they did. This she effected; but Lady Caroline and Mrs. Saunders seemed not to notice her, and passed on to their carriage. The Duke stopped
in

in the church yard, and after saying a few words to Doctor Sandolph, was introduced by him to his guests, whom he desired to accompany to the parsonage.

His Grace was one of those men who pass their whole lives in flirtation, not to mention less innocent amusements. Had he known so charming a girl had been in his neighbourhood, he would not patiently have submitted to a confinement of some days, for a bad cold, which his physician had prescribed; but Doctor Sandolph having only hinted in a careless manner, that he had company from London, his curiosity had not been excited. But, what was his delight and surprize when he beheld Louisa! Close by her side he walked, attempting to draw her into conversation; but Lady Roseville (eager to be distinguished) thwarted his purpose, by taking upon herself, to answer every word he addressed to her daughter.

The Duke would gladly have disregarded her; he penetrated into her disposition, smiled at her folly, and only humoured her forward airs, that he might insinuate himself into Louisa's good graces. Exercise had additionally vermilioned her cheeks; her glittering hair sported in the wind, and occasionally she turned her fine eyes towards him. Felicitating himself on having such a treasure within his park, he determined to make the
most

most of this advantage, even though it should oblige him to notice, by his civilities, such a ridiculous woman as her mother already appeared to him.

When they reached the parsonage, he reluctantly took his leave ; and addressing himself to Lady Roseville and Louisa, said, " he hoped they should be good neighbours ; that for his part, he should neglect nothing to render their abode in the country agreeable ; and that he did not doubt, but that Lady Caroline would do the same."

Doctor Sandolph then, by his desire, accompanied him part of the way home ; he longed to reproach him for his silence about his lovely ward, and to ask a thousand questions about her, yet he durst not allow his tongue to launch forth too warmly in her praise, well knowing that the Doctor, who perfectly knew his libertine turn, would be alarmed at it.

No sooner was the Duke gone, than Lady Roseville, elated by the civilities he had shewn her, expressed the warmest admiration of him, hinting at the same time, that his sister did not appear equally engaging ; nor was Lord William forgotten ; for at the Doctor's return, she enquired what was become of him, and learnt, with much chagrin, that he went to town the preceding day, where his stay was uncertain.

In

In the evening, Lady Caroline and Mrs. Saunders came to tea. The former was a charming woman, though past the prime of life; and the latter, the widow of an officer, tenderly attached to Lady Caroline, with whom she had resided near thirty years.

Lady Roseville, who did not doubt, but that the Duke had prevailed on his sister, to shew her this civility, was quite delighted with it. If Lady Caroline was not much prejudiced in her favour, she was certainly charmed with Louisa; and as her politeness prevented her making any disobliging distinctions, her attentions were equally distributed; therefore she invited the whole party to dine at the castle the next day.

As soon as she was gone, Lady Roseville observed, that Lady Caroline was extremely well bred, and agreeable, though less so than the Duke; "and pray who is this Mrs. Saunders?" added she.

"A most respectable woman;" answered Doctor Sandolph; "well born, but unfortunate in her circumstances."

"'Tis very lucky for her," said Lady Roseville, "that Lady Caroline is so good to her; she seems to treat her quite like her equal."

"And why should she not?" cried Doctor Sandolph, warmly; "when the same pious and virtuous principles actuate their souls, can you
imagine

imagine friendship has not long ago, levelled all distinctions between them? Lady Caroline knows how to appreciate Mrs. Saunders's worth; and such is her generous disposition, as never to forget, that the unfortunate, are even more grateful for delicate attentions, than for essential services."

"O! if once my uncle gets upon this topic," cried Miss Sandolph, "your Ladyship may expect to hear a fine long panegyric on both the ladies, but particularly on the old one. I have often suspected, that in spite of her boasted attachment to Lady Caroline, she will be prevailed upon, one of these days, to desert her, and bless him with her withered hand."

"Mary! Mary!" cried the Doctor, with a severe aspect, "remember that hand is ever open to the distressed, and has scarcely any other employment, than to administer to their wants. It ill becomes you, to ridicule the effects of age; a time will come (and that not very distant) when your own hand, now so flexible, and so expert in executing your ingenious fancies, shall refuse its office, and assume perhaps, a still worse appearance than that of Mrs. Saunders."

"Upon my word, I believe things are gone further than I thought;" said Miss Sandolph, "or you would have borne an innocent joke, with more temper."

The

The Doctor answered not, but applied to his snuff box, as was usual to him, when his niece seemed disposed to tease him ; an amusement she particularly delighted in.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE next morning Lady Roseville appropriated entirely to the important business of the toilette; and Louisa, with much reluctance, was forced, by her command, to appear in a style of dress very unusual in the country. The former was much surprized to see that Miss Sandolph was habited with her usual simplicity; her good sense had long ago taught her, that a plain figure appeared still plainer when loaded with ornaments; yet she followed the fashion, so as not to look particular.

Lady Roseville was struck with delight at the stately appearance of the castle. "Ah!" thought she, while she was traversing a magnificent *suite* of rooms, "if Louisa could but get Lord William, I should feel myself quite at home in this princely house!"

Lady Caroline received the party in the most obliging manner; she had the happy art of putting people at their ease; affability and dignity were blended in all her actions; but the latter was so mild as never to be felt, except by those who presumed too far upon her gentleness; then, indeed, they were quickly made sensible that she perfectly knew what was due to herself. To shine was
not

not her object ; she rather wished to call forth the talents of others, which she was prompt in developing ; and, adapting her conversation to such subjects as favoured their display, she ensured to herself some degree of gratitude from those who were thus indulged. Vanity might with security expand before her, who had none of her own ; in secret she smiled at it. But not so lightly did she treat the reports of calumny, or the suggestions of envy or of malice ; these she instantly crushed as they rose, and none dared a second time to repeat a scandalous story in her presence. Though her understanding was clear and strong, and her judgment excellent, she was sometimes duped by hypocrites, owing to the excessive purity of her own mind, which could with difficulty think ill of others.

Her exterior was perfectly in character with her disposition ; it was both graceful and majestic. Her mild and benevolent countenance was rendered still more interesting, by the pensive cast of her eyes. Time, as yet, had little altered the symmetry of her features, but her bloom had long since vanished ; it seemed as if grief, had left its pallid touch upon her cheek.

The Duke, with a concealed rapture, beheld Louisa ; he placed her next himself at table, and as she was wholly unconscious of the impression she

she made upon him, she listened with satisfaction to his conversation. He suspected that the light style in which he generally addressed young ladies, would not do on this occasion; and that, to gain Louisa's ear, rational subjects must be substituted to flattery; and as he was capable of treating them agreeably, and that his manners were extremely insinuating, she thought herself fortunate in her situation.

Lady Caroline condescended to adapt her conversation to the standard of Lady Roseville's capacity. Mrs. Saunders was naturally silent and reserved, though less so with Doctor Sandolph than with most people: that worthy man was not exempt from the garrulity of old age, but it was never tiresome in him, for his wandering life had made him acquainted with a variety of anecdotes, and curious circumstances, which he knew how to introduce very agreeably; and the excellence of his memory preserved him from tautology. Pious without austerity; benign, social, and cheerful; his presence, so far from damping the gay mirth of society, seemed to add to its hilarity. Not so *that* of his niece: though very sensible, she was not agreeable; few people pleased her, and those few alone, she tried to please. Neither generosity nor benevolence were strangers in her breast, yet she rarely engaged esteem, because it was repelled

by a pœevish, sarcastic humour, which never even spared those she loved the most.

Lady Caroline S——'s amiable, complacent disposition, could not sympathize with her; so that the neighbourhood, connection, and even the strong partiality she felt for Doctor Sandolph, could not induce her often, to invite his niece to the castle.

After coffee, Lady Caroline proposed a walk, which greatly disconcerted Lady Roseville, her style of dress being very inconvenient for that purpose; which the former recollecting, she offered to stay at home with her, while the rest of the party took a stroll. The gentlemen (there were other guests besides Doctor Sandolph) were not yet risen from table.

Mrs. Saunders led the ladies through a delightful shrubbery, to a grove of fine beech, where, amidst the tall shining stems free from underwood, they caught a glympse of a green surrounded with white cottages, all uniformly regular; each had a porch shaded with honeysuckles, with a bench on each side of the door. "That, said Miss Sandolph, pointing to it, "is Caroline-Green; do, Mrs. Saunders, permit Miss Roseville to see it."

This request was granted. The Green rather sloped to the south, and was sheltered on the north by the grove. Louisa, who plainly perceived it

was

was some charitable institution, desired to be informed of the particulars concerning it.

"This Green, madam, is named after Lady Caroline," said Mrs. Saunders, "who has herself been at the sole expence of erecting the cottages. They afford an asylum to old age. You may see," continued she, as they advanced, "that there are six on each side of the quadrangle; they are only one story high, to save the poor creatures the trouble of going up and down stairs. Each house contains two tolerable-sized rooms, and a small pantry, with a little garden behind; and each house is inhabited by two old women, that they may comfort and assist each other. None are admitted under fifty-five. They wear an uniform of brown stuff, checked aprons, and coarse muslin handkerchiefs; they are new clothed every year at Michaelmas, and every third year they have a plain black bonnet, and a long cloth cloak given them. They clean and cultivate their gardens themselves, and their produce supplies them with breakfast and supper, but their dinner is found them. On the east side, where you see that small dome, there is a chapel, and close to it a refectory, where precisely at one o'clock, they are served with barley-broth and meat, and half a pint of ale to cheer their old hearts.

The chaplain of the castle reads prayers to them

every morning, and they are enjoined no other employment, but to keep themselves, and every thing about them, clean and neat. Those, however, who are still hearty, and enjoy good health, are encouraged in industry. If they raise more vegetables than they can consume, they are allowed to sell the overplus; and they are furnished with a certain quantity of wool, to spin and knit. The produce of the industry of each, goes to the common stock, and finds them in shoes and stockings. Wood and candles are allowed them, but they receive no money from Lady Caroline. Some among them languish for the luxuries of tea and snuff; and to gain the means of buying these articles, employ themselves in distilling for the neighbourhood, teaching little children to work and read, and sometimes engage themselves as nurses to the sick in the village; but these are voluntary exertions, and not required of them."

"But are these old souls so good and orderly," asked Louisa, "as to require no regulations to restrain them from bad habits, and evil propensities?"

"They are," returned Mrs. Saunders, "like the rest of the world, subject to mental, as well as bodily infirmities. To prevent both as much as possible, no strong liquors are ever permitted to enter the Green: a deprivation of the annual gift

of clothes follows wrangling, or abusive language ; petty disputes are decided by the seven senior women ; a lie, a theft, or a malicious action being clearly proved, occasions immediate expulsion ; and no person who has been dismissed the Green, can be admitted a second time. Those who have resided there seven years without censure, are entitled to obtain from Lady Caroline, a pension of ten pounds a year for any relation they choose to name, and several have obtained it."

"Aye, aye," cried Miss Sandolph, "I dare say they have sufficient cunning to conceal their faults, and from some transgressions, they are secured by age and ugliness."

Mrs. Saunders, without noticing this speech, continued, "Were you, Miss Roseville, to witness Lady Caroline's solicitude for these poor women, to see her go from house to house, listening with mild complacency to their tedious tales, enquiring into their wants, comforting the afflicted, pointing out means for their relief, stifling any little jealousies that arise amongst them—were you, I say, thus to see her, you would think her almost an angel."

At that moment they arrived at the door of one of the cottages, "We will enter here, if you please," said Mrs. Saunders ; "this is dame Allen's hut, the mother of the society."

So saying, she tapped with her stick against the door, which was opened by a woman bent beneath the weight of years, and whose eyes were quite dim.

"Bless my heart," cried she, "I believe here's my lady! well, this is joy indeed!"

"How are you, dame?" said Mrs. Saunders.

"Purely, madam; but I don't hear her ladyship's voice; I fear she b'ant among you. Dear me, why it be now three days since she came to her poor old woman! I pray God she mayn't be ill; she donnot use to be so long away."

Mrs. Saunder's satisfied her as to Lady Caroline's health, and said she had been particularly engaged of late, but would come very soon.

An old man, with a wooden leg, now stumped in amongst them.

"May I be so bold," said he, "to ask if this be not dame Allen's house? for I was directed here."

"The Lord be merciful unto me!" cried the old woman, sinking into a chair, "if Walter, my son, were not dead, I should have thought I now heard his voice! Who be you? Speak quickly," cried she, much agitated, "What do you want with me?"

The old man now stumped briskly towards her, and taking her in his arms, "I am your son,
your

your own son, Walter," cried he, " but, poor heart ; you can't see me ; you are grown quite dim ; yet, blessed be God, you are alive !"

Time had not destroyed dame Allen's sensibility ; she repeatedly hugged her son, and mumbled a grateful ejaculation to Heaven for restoring him to her.

" And where have you been all this time ?" cried she ; " come Lady-day, it will be thirty years since you left me ; I was then stout and hearty, but here I be now all tottering ; and Robin, poor old Robin, is gone ; he has been dead many years, and I shall soon follow him."

" I hope not, mother ; you are still hearty, and I have got wherewithal to cheer and comfort you."

" I want nothing," cried dame Allen, " keep your money for yourself, Walter ; my good lady takes care of me ; 'tis she that has kept me from sinking into the grave. Blessings on her noble heart !"

" Has she done so ?" said Walter, " God Almighty reward her for it ! I would have sent you some money, but it was not in my power. I was, as you know, pressed into the sea service, and sent to America."

" There," interrupted she, " I thought you had been killed ; and many a tear have I shed for you, my poor Walter !"

"Our vessel," continued he, "was taken by a French privateer, and I lost my leg in the engagement."

"Alack a day! my heart misgave me!" cried the old woman; "I thought as how I heard an odd sort of stumping on the floor; poor Walter!"

"Well, ne'er mind," said he, "I had not cared if I had lost both my legs, could I have saved our ship from the monseers. What became of me for a long while, I know not, for I lay like one dead: however, on my recovery, finding myself on shore, I made shift to escape away to the woods, and there I fell into worse hands than those I had left; for I was taken by the savages, and carried up, the Lord knows how far into the country, and a sad time I had of it most surely: However, I grew at last accustomed to these folks' wild way of life; but I never was able to go of their hunting parties, on account of my leg, so I was left to guard the women and children; and one day, seeing a fair opportunity, I gave them the slip; and after suffering great hardships during a very long journey, I got to one of our towns, and had the good luck to be taken on board a fine English vessel, which was going to sail, and soon after we made some very rich prizes, and I got enough to keep me warm the rest of my life. Various accidents hindered me from coming to England sooner, but at last I am got safe into port.

port. "I beg pardon," added he, turning round with his cap in his hand; "I beg pardon of these great gentry, but some how, my joy at seeing my poor old mother, has made me forget my duty to their honours."

The apology was needless—every person present was moved, yet pleased with the scene; and they retired, to leave dame Allen and her son, at liberty to give full scope to their feelings.

Mrs. Saunders then conducted her company along the back of the gardens to the refectory. The summer path was through a narrow gravel walk, bordered on each side, by thick hedges of Hawthorn and sweet briar, which enclosed the whole quadrangle. The gardens were well stored with culinary herbs and roots, and some had flowers neatly arranged in plots; hedges of roses and honey suckles, formed a separation between the gardens.

The refectory was a very simple building, but in a good style of architecture; in this, Lady Caroline had indulged her own taste, as much as the convenience of her old women. The face of the building was sixty feet in length; a kitchen on one side, took up fifteen feet; and a spare room for the sick, as much on the other. The refectory placed in the centre was thirty feet long, and over it was Lady Caroline's drug shop, and store rooms.

In the winter, this building was warmed by a large stove ; the floor was matted, and a long table stood in the middle, surrounded with benches which had backs, so that it was a most comfortable and pleasing apartment. It communicated by a small vestibule with the chapel, which was extremely neat, though void of ornaments ; and this had a large clock, which the old women did not consider as the least of their comforts. After having viewed the chapel, they descended a flight of steps, which brought them on the green, kept in the nicest order by the inhabitants.

Mrs. Saunders told Louisa, that all the cottages were furnished alike ; each had two beds, and the same number of easy chairs, stools, and cupboards.

Louisa was delighted beyond measure with this institution ; she envied Lady Caroline the power of making so many happy people, and she returned to the castle, with increased esteem and admiration for that amiable woman.

The gentlemen joined them in their way back, but Louisa felt little disposed to enter into conversation ; she wished to meditate on what she had seen ; the tender meeting between dame Allen and her son, was still present to her imagination ; it had disposed her mind to a soft melancholy.

As soon as the Duke had escorted his guests to Lady Roseville's carriage, Louisa gave a description

tion of the Green to her mother, and said how highly she had been entertained.

Lady Roseville listened to her little narration with an absent air, and when she had finished it, observed, that "that it was singular Lady Caroline could find any amusement in such a romantic whim; for her part, she thought it was only encouraging idleness.

"Idleness, Madam!" exclaimed Louisa, "surely these poor women have reached a time of life, when much can't be expected from them; but nevertheless they are not idle—ah! Madam, think how many happy beings she makes!"

"They would be just as happy without that fuss and parade; two shillings a week, with the liberty of running to an ale-house, and gossiping there as long as they chose, would please them much better.

"Parties of that kind are just what she guards against," cried Miss Sandolph; "her wish is to supply their real wants, but not to indulge them in vice and intemperance: however, to feel due admiration for noble actions, people must have minds capable of conceiving them. It was natural that Miss Roseville should be struck with the excellence of this institution.

Lady Roseville coloured with anger, and said something sharp to her daughter, not daring to attack Miss Sandolph. Louisa maintained a deter-

mined silence, and the carriage stopping at the parsonage door, they retired till supper to their respective apartments, Lady Roseville regretting that her finery had been ill-bestowed, and that she had passed the evening in a dull *tête-à-tête* with Lady Caroline S.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE next morning, Louisa determined she would again visit Caroline Green; accordingly she sallied forth, before any of the family were stirring, except Miss Sandolph, who was employed in little domestic concerns. It had been a very thick mist; but the sun was beginning to dispel it, and presaged a delightful day, which tempted Louisa, instead of passing by the castle, to make a circuit, and traverse part of the terrace, which she had hitherto only seen at a distance. A boat served to ferry people across the river, and landed them about half a mile from the Green.

The terrace was prodigiously elevated, three miles in length, and commanded a most beautiful prospect. The Duke, at a great expence, had made a fine broad road over its summit, extending thence to a considerable city. One side bounded by a sloping common, was planting at intervals; but the trees, from the sharpness of the air at that elevation, rather diverged into wild fantastic shapes, than rose into any great height. The other side of the terrace, sunk abruptly into broken rocky ground, intermixed with a variety of shrubs and plants. Here and there, a small rill trickled among the stones, 'till several gathering together, dashed

ashed impetuously over the rocks, which opposed their passage, and fell foaming into the Severn beneath. This river, broad and clear, glided along the valley, and after many windings, was lost amidst the blue haze that enveloped the town of S——.

Agreeable as was this distant view, that immediately under the eye was no less so ; for the opposite bank gradually swelling into a gentle rise ; the varied and dressed ground of the park finely wooded, and the turrets of the castle,

“ ————— to Gothic fancy fair
Amid the shades emerging struck the view.”

While the Malvern hills, so softened off by distance, as seemingly to melt into the clouds, terminated the scene.

Louisa, who had an exquisite sense of the beauties of nature, and could in a masterly style delineate them, thought this a favourable moment to make a sketch of the castle, which appeared to particular advantage, from the sun darting his rays full upon it. She had taken her station on the jutting stump of an oak, and the surviving branches still retained their wonted beauty ; she was preparing her pencil, when a sudden gust of wind tore off her hat, and whirled it along the road. In vain she pursued it ; the hat seemed enchanted like the famous ball that drew after it the Caliph Vathek,

and all his people; but not like that, did it disappear.

For a gentleman on horseback passing that way, marked with admiration, the grace and agility of her motions; her muslin dress clinging round her limbs, discovered their admirable proportion; and her fine hair sported in beautiful disorder down her back. Instantly he leaped off his horse, and stopping the fugitive hat, presented it to Louisa; who, raising her eyes, exclaimed, "Good Heaven! Lord Danefield!" He was somewhat less surprised, for he had already recognized Louisa's beloved form; and his sparkling eyes eagerly, gazing on her, expressed his delight at the mingled joy and confusion which her countenance betrayed at this unexpected meeting. Thus thrown off her guard by surprise, her attempts to assume her wonted coldness of aspect were vain; for Lord Danefield saw through the thin disguise.

After answering his enquiries concerning her health, she asked with down cast eyes, what chance had brought him thither? And he informed her, that being at Melvern, which was only ten miles from L. castle, he came to breakfast with Lord William S. who was one of his most intimate friends. "I conclude," added he, that "you are at present on a visit to Lady Caroline S."

Louisa informed him that she was at the parsonage, and that Lord William was in town.

"I cannot

" I cannot regret that," cried he, " since I have the happiness of meeting you, so I shall beg a breakfast of Doctor Sandolph. But, my dear Miss Roseville, suffer me to take this charming opportunity to open my whole soul to you ; listen I entreat you complacently to me, and fix the colour of my future fate."

Louisa already flurried; now trembled so excessively, that Lord Danefield reproached himself for entering so abruptly upon such a subject. He took her hand, and passing it under his arm, led her to the stump where she had been seated before. There placing himself by her side, his eyes eloquently consulted her's, to know whether she was sufficiently composed to hear him.

" May I now speak?" said he, in those softened accents that had from the first of their acquaintance, made such a deep impression upon her.

" I am prepared to listen ;" answered she with a smile, " though I know not what use it can——"

" Oh! 'tis of the most important use, that you should read into my heart, and no longer be unacquainted with all that has passed in it, since first I beheld you, and even before that time. You have heard that I am engaged ; let me explain this matter.

Know then, that my father, without consulting my inclinations, determined I should marry Lady Almeria.

Almeria Melvern: on his death bed he made this known to me, (possibly my extreme youth had occasioned him to delay the communication) and so much was I affected by his danger, that I would at that moment have promised any thing he could have desired; the words were already upon my lips, when a convulsion seized him, and he never after was in a condition to hear me. Lord Melvern, (one of the best men in the world, and who had proved his friendship to my father by the most essential services) then took charge of me; and greatly am I indebted to his care and attention in finishing my education. For a few months, his house became my home; there I had daily opportunities of seeing his daughter. I thought her handsome and accomplished, but so little did she interest me, that I rather shunned, than courted, her society. Her conduct was different. Possibly as she knew that we were destined for each other, she did not judge it necessary to conceal a growing partiality for me; and she would even suffer her young companions jestingly, to call her Lady Dane-field; a sound I never heard without secret disgust. My reserve, was attributed to the bashfulness of a school boy, which Lord Melvern said, would soon wear off, and it did not damp his wishes for our union. For my part, I considered with satisfaction, that this event would be retarded
by

by my going abroad, and I left England without a single sigh.

During my stay on the continent, I saw many charming women ; but I retained my indifference, nor did it cease on my return, when I renewed my acquaintance with Lady Almeria. I saw indeed that she was extremely improved, and could not withhold the admiration due to her beauty ; but still it did not touch my heart ; nor did her mind (tho' cultivated) possess greater powers of pleasing.

Fortunately for me, she had discovered that it was inconsistent with the dignity of her own character, to treat me with that marked partiality she had done formerly. The ceremonious footing we were now upon, did not displease me ; but I saw it surprized Lord Melvern, who tried to establish a friendly confidence between us ; however I contented myself with paying Lady Almeria those attentions, to which every woman has an indisputable right ; and in return, I met with such very cold civility, as I might, without vanity, have attributed to a degree of pique at my indifference. This indifference, I sometimes reproached myself, for not having at least tried to conquer. I recalled to mind my father's wishes, my obligations to Lord Melvern, and the advantages I should reap from his alliance. I considered too, that tho' I did not feel for Lady Almeria that warm, that tender
fenti.

sentiment, which my fancy had represented to me as so delicious, I certainly preferred no other woman to her, and had the greatest reason to believe, that it would not be very difficult to regain the interest I once had in her affections. In this sober reflecting mood, I endeavoured to persuade myself, that it was not necessary I should be violently in love, to be happy ; that this match was in every respect too eligible to be renounced, merely for a romantic scruple ; and in hopes of discovering qualities that might attract (if not love) at least a tender esteem, I resolved to study Lady Almeria's character. A conversation too with Lord Melvern, in which he spoke of our intended union, as a matter on which his heart was fixed, and clearly gave me to understand, that his daughter's happiness (notwithstanding her apparent coldness) depended upon it ; gave additional force to the motives that had already occurred to me. Without absolutely engaging myself, I confusedly dropped some words in Lady Almeria's praise, but hinted, that fortunately before we came of age, we should have time to be well acquainted with the dispositions of each other ; and concluded with fervent assurances of the grateful disposition of my heart towards his Lordship. With Lady Almeria I came to no explanation ; but I suspected that she was no stranger to what had passed between her father

ther and myself, and had, to my great surprize, drawn an inference favourable to her wishes; for her behaviour to me became suddenly too obliging, not to distress me. She now frequently desired my attendance in her rides and walks; this increase of intimacy, furnished me with opportunities for acquiring a perfect knowledge of her disposition; and the result did not diminish my repugnance to this engagement; but I have too much regard for Lord Melvern, to point out even to you, my dear Miss Roseville, the shades which obscure his daughter's merit.

After passing two months at Melvern, my military duty furnished me with a reasonable excuse for going to London, where I should have amused myself very agreeably, could I have forgotten my fatal engagement, which, though not absolutely ratified, was generally understood as a thing fixed; and how to break it, I knew not. In this perplexity, I received a pressing letter from Lord Melvern, desiring me to hasten to Melvern, where he had invited many of my friends, to hunt for the last time that season. The very day before I set out, chance made me acquainted with you. Oh! never shall I forget what I felt, when after lifting you pale and senseless out of the chair, I carried you in my arms to the first house I saw! Pity, and a sentiment entirely new to me, took possession of

of my soul; and the instant that you revived, and turned your charming eyes towards me, fixed me irrevocably yours."

Lord Daneield now seizing Louisa's hand, pressed it rapturously to his lips; she withdrew it, but very gently, and he continued,—

"Can you have patience with me a little longer?" "Yes," cried she, "the effort is not extremely difficult." "Well then," returned he, "you may believe that at least I murmured (not to use a more energetic term) against my ill fortune, which obliged me to leave town. How additionally disagreeable did Lady Almeria appear to me on my return! and now decidedly bent on breaking my engagement, I anxiously sought for an opportunity of coming to an explanation with Lord Melvern, which he seemed studiously to avoid; and as the house was full of company, it was not easy to find him alone. So, that after more than a fortnight thus passed, I quitted the country, without having effected what I wished.

Immediately after my arrival in town, I saw you at Mrs. Raby's; not the pale touching object I had once beheld, but blooming with health and beauty. Scarcely could I restrain the emotions of my throbbing heart, and still less endure your friend's ill-timed railery, on the subject of Lady Almeria. To conceal my vexation, I was forced

to tear myself from an object, that I could have gazed upon for ever. My passion encreased every time I saw you ; but sweet and delicious as were the sensations that filled my heart, they did not long continue so ; for soon, very soon, they were embittered by jealousy. It first began at the play ; and was confirmed at Lady Roseville's ball. I saw you smile with bewitching sweetness on Lord Pompoufton. Heaven and earth what did I not then endure ! In this frame of mind, how could I brook his insolence ? Yet, I confess, while we sat at table, I was somewhat calmed by your softness, and for an instant had the presumption to think——But to proceed——You know what followed, yet you know not what agonies I felt, when, from every officious tongue, I heard the fatal news of your intended marriage with my rival ! You might have seen the deep dejection marked on my countenance the morning I met you in the Strand ; but your eyes were disdainfully averted from me.

Soon after the affair of the duel, Lord Melvern called upon me, and after gently reprimanding me for engaging in it, represented, with all the eloquence he possesses, the cruel uneasiness it had given his daughter. “ I cannot suppose,” added he, “ that forgetting your engagement with her, you have formed another attachment ; and that

too

too with a lady, who is herself (as I am told) engaged. But on this occasion, 'tis necessary you should be explicit with Almeria, and banish those doubts from her breast, which I have combated in vain."

Excessively embarrassed, but determined to be sincere, I ventured, with as much delicacy as the case required, to hint my wish of receding from an engagement, which I reminded him had not been formed by myself. But Lord Melvern interrupting me, with a warmth unusual to him, asked, if I had received any encouragement from you; and being answered in the negative, "Then consider well," cried he, "what you are about; you know, that for many years past, I have adopted you for my son, and seen in you, the husband of my only child—and why do I prefer you to all others? because I think you possess all those qualities, most likely to make her happy: nor do I shew myself less solicitous for your happiness, when I destine for you, a young, virtuous, accomplished (and though she be my daughter, I will say) beautiful woman; I might have added, rich; but I know the nobleness of your sentiments too well, either to dwell upon that article, or upon the pressure of pecuniary difficulties, that will fall upon you, in consequence of a failure in your engagement."

I am

"I am not ignorant," interrupted Louisa, "of the conditions depending upon that."

Lord Danefield continued, "Indeed my regard for you," said his Lordship, "would certainly prompt me, to do all in my power to lessen them; but still——" "No, no," cried I, "*that* I would not suffer." "Well then," said he, in continuation, "conquer this wavering disposition, and spare a fond father, the mortification of seeing his child rejected; and that too, by a man, for whom she has shewn a decided preference."

The excessive agitation apparent in Lord Melvern, while he was thus speaking, affected me extremely; I would at that instant, have sacrificed my own happiness, to tranquillize this second parent; and seizing his hand, "conceal," cried I, "from Lady Almeria what has passed; I feel I must be your son, though I own I am averse to marriage. But, Lady Almeria is *your* daughter—perhaps time—in short, allow me a few months, before I finally engage myself."

Lord Melvern consented; that day I dined with him; and without making any protestation to Lady Almeria, that my heart could not avow, I expressed myself flattered at the interest she had deigned to take in my fate. She said little; but serenity took place of the gloom I had noticed at my entrance.

A few

A few days after, I joined you in the street, and in trying to deprecate the anger, which I imagined my *fracas* with Lord Pompoufton had kindled in your breast, I found, to my unspeakable joy, that I had no cause of uneasiness upon his account: however, I was not destined to be happy, for when in the agreeable tumult of my spirits, I forgot Lady Almeria, and presumed to hint my passion; I was soon recalled to a sense of my unhappy situation, and drew upon myself strictures, which I was not conscious of deserving. That morning I met you in Kensington Gardens, I fancied I discerned an unusual benignity in your disposition towards me: encouraged by this idea, I had resolved to open my heart to you, and seek consolation, where I durst not hope for love; when, the recollection of what had so recently passed between Lord Melvern and myself, bade me be silent, and Lady Almeria's unexpected arrival, totally disconcerted me. Your motion to depart, grieved me—the intended confession must be deferred; and some incoherent expressions escaped me.

You will naturally wonder, why Lord Melvern should set his heart so much upon this match, my fortune being so very small: but, independent of the strong affection he bears me, he has an excessive predilection for ancient blood; the great

antiquity of my family, perhaps inferior to none in the kingdom, is, in his opinion, a greater recommendation than riches. He is besides, apt to suffer any favourite project to root itself so deeply in his imagination, as not easily to be plucked out; and he has long amused his leisure hours, with planning schemes for the benefit of my estate; his generous heart swelling with delight, at the idea of restoring my family to its ancient lustre. To crush at once all his hopes, was a cruel task; I had attempted it, but my heart at that time, depressed by your cruelty, could not resist his persuasive powers. God knows! it has since endured the severest conflicts; and unable to bear them any longer, I had resolved to write to you; but, since my good fortune has thus brought me into your presence, put an end to them, I conjure you, and allow me, my dear Miss Roseville, to offer you my hand and heart—a heart, that glows with the most pure and ardent affection.”

“No, no, my Lord; this must not be,” cried Louisa, exceedingly agitated; “your engagement ought to be sacred; nor can I suffer you to break it on my account—I would not indeed, refuse an explanation, which you so earnestly desired; but, now leave me; leave me, Lord Danefield, I entreat you.”

“Leave you! no; excuse my disobeying you
this

this once ; but this moment must doom me to happiness, or misery. Ah ! dear Miss Roseville, since my fate depends upon you, can——”

“ Not upon me, Lord Danefield, but upon Lady Almeria ; she deserves your affection ; and how cruelly would she feel your preference of me ! Think too of Lord Melvern, the good Lord Melvern’s disappointment ;—of the situation of your affairs ; and forget—forget a woman, who but for these objections——”

Louisa paused—her head was averted ; but Lord Danefield perceiving her emotion, dropped on one knee, and pressing her hand to his breast—

“ Beloved Miss Roseville ! charming Louisa !” cried he, “ Ah ! say, were I disengaged, might I then hope ? Speak, I conjure you.”

“ Can you doubt,” said Louisa, blushing, “ that if you were free, and that the exigency of your affairs did not require more wealth than I have to bestow——”

“ I will be free !” vehemently exclaimed he, “ this very day I will be free ! my bonds shall be broken. Talk not of wealth—I despise it. What signifies a narrow fortune, if you will deign to share it ? I grieve indeed for Lord Melvern ; but no consideration can prevent my declaring to him, that I cannot live without you ; and I am sure he loves me too well, to oppose my happiness.”

“ Yes, if it did not interfere with that of his daughter.”

“ ’Tis true; that certainly is an obstacle, but not insurmountable.—Lady Almeria’s pride and delicacy, will soon conquer an unrequited partiality; and among those who may aspire to her hand, she will find many more deserving, and some more sensible of her attractions than I have been; for my disposition never could have sympathized with hers, consequently I could not have made her happy. Remember too, that she has no cause to complain of me, for I never basely attempted to gain her affections, or even ever hinted a syllable, that alluded to any engagement between us.”

“ True; but still it subsisted; what do I say,” cried Louisa, “ it still subsists; the world will judge unfavourably of this desertion; and the whole Melvern family will resent it: besides too, after what has passed between you and his lordship, I do not think you can with honour recede.”

“ Pardon me, Madam, I made no positive promise; but, alas! ’tis in vain to plead, if I am an object of indifference to you.”

“ Ah! Lord Danefield!” faintly exclaimed Louisa.

“ Am I then mistaken?” cried he, rapturously seizing her hand, “ beloved Miss Roseville,

ville, revive my spirits but with one word, and I'll engage to conquer all difficulties, were they treble in number."

"When this is done," said Louisa, with a soft smile, "if you have any doubts of my sentiments, it will be time enough then, to be more explicit."

"No, no;" cried he, "no cruel delays, speak now; only say that you will be mine, if Lord Melvern consents, and I shall be satisfied."

Louisa made no answer, but her expressive eyes encouraged hope; and to stop the effusions of his joy, she reminded him, that it grew very late, and that she must hasten home. He obtained her permission to accompany her, upon condition, that the subject they had so fully discussed, should not be revived.

"I will obey you;" said he, "but remember my odious engagement is dissolved; henceforwards I am yours (delightful thought!) when next we meet, I shall claim from *my* Louisa, her promise of a return of confidence; and in the mean while, live upon hope." Thus saying, he passionately kissed her hand, and they set out together for the parsonage. Caroline Green had long been forgotten by Louisa; and the lateness of the hour, obliged her to conduct Lord Danefield the shortest way home, which was by ferrying over the river.

CHAPTER XX.

LADY Roseville was sitting by an open window in the breakfast parlour, when she saw her daughter advance with a gentleman, whom she immediately flattered herself might be Lord William S. not considering the improbability, even if he were returned, of his joining a person whom he had never seen.

But when she recognized Lord Danefield's figure, she was disappointed and provoked. This was the only man of fashion, whose alliance she did not covet; he was poor, and that was a crime in her eyes; he never flattered her, and that was wholly unpardonable.

When therefore he entered the room, and respectfully saluted her, she scarcely noticed him; and rebuked Louisa for having made her wait breakfast, though in fact it was not ready.

From Doctor Sandolph, Lord Danefield received a hearty welcome, and he had the good fortune to please his niece. Lord Danefield would willingly have accepted the Doctor's invitation to stay dinner, had not a look from Louisa forbade him, and with a mixture of hope, joy, and sorrow, he departed.

As soon as he was gone, Lady Roseville exclaimed,

claimed, "in the name of fortune, Louisa, why do you encourage that indigent Lord? How came he to follow you here? Methinks, with all your fine sentiments, you should be ashamed to seduce him from his intended bride."

"I seduce him, Madam! I hope I am incapable of such an action."

"How came you then to let him know where he might find you?"

"He did not know it, Madam; we met by mere accident."

"Oh! yes, by mere accident, I dare say! Those accidents too, brought you often together in London. Do you think I did not notice his looks, and your pretty feigned confusion? I am not to be imposed upon, I assure you;" and away she went in a passion.

Louisa too retired; she was vexed; Lady Roseville's words had sunk deep into her heart. "Good Heaven!" thought she, "shall I then appear in such a despicable light? Why, why did I consent! Ah! Lord Danefield, I ought not to have listened to you!"

A little reflection, however, somewhat calmed her: she considered that Lady Almeria was in reality far from amiable, not calculated to render her lover happy, and certainly did not feel for him that refined passion, of which she herself was con-

scious. Most probably too, if he had not formed another attachment, he would not have married Lady Almeria, for his dislike to this union had been invariable. Lord Melvern's solicitude for it, had made him suppose, that his ward, and his daughter's happiness, was one and the same, tho' in fact nothing could be more distinct. Both thinking as they did, were most likely to be happy asunder. Was it, therefore, necessary, that she should sacrifice the bright hopes she had so lately admitted, to the idle censure of those, who unacquainted with the real sentiments and characters of the parties, were not competent judges of the matter? Lord Melvern, she hoped, would not long be dissatisfied with Lord Danefield's choice, when he saw him happy; and she proposed to herself such a line of conduct, as could not fail of gaining his esteem. Her fortune, though not large, was far from contemptible, and might assist in arranging Lord Danefield's affairs; and though Lady Almeria's pride might suffer, Louisa flattered herself, her heart would not be very deeply pained, for there was too much affectation in her deportment, to induce a belief of much sensibility.

Having thus tranquillized her mind, she next considered, whether she ought not to communicate to Doctor Sandolph the important transactions of
the

the morning; and her ingenuous frankness soon decided for the communication. For this purpose, she sought for an opportunity of finding him alone; but none offering, and being unwilling to excite her mother's curiosity, by desiring to speak with him apart, she thought, since she had not yet spoken, and two days had already elapsed, she might now as well wait 'till she heard from Lord Danefield, which, with trembling anxiety, she expected to do every moment; for at her request, he had promised that a letter should precede his visit.

Doctor Sandolph observed her pensive air; he partly suspected the cause, and desirous of giving another turn to her reflections, he related the following anecdotes of the inhabitants of the Castle, while she and Miss Sandolph sat at work.

The late Duke, whose first cousin I had the honour to be, said Doctor Sandolph, married Lady Gertrude—and had by her two children, the present Duke, and Lady Caroline. Her Grace died in the prime of life, before she had time to finish her daughter's education; Mrs. Saunders, however, kindly undertook that task, and has never since quitted Lady Caroline.

The Duke, for several years, continued inconsolable; his disposition was remarkably affectionate, and all his pleasures centred in domestic

life: but being still young, and considering that all his hopes of transmitting his family honours to posterity, rested on a sickly youth, (for such at that time was the present Duke) he resolved to re-marry.

Lady Clanstone was the person on whom he fixed; she was a widow of about six and thirty, and had an only son, destined to possess an affluent fortune. Her person was extremely pleasing, and her mind uncommonly amiable; so that the Duke, who was very fond of his children, particularly of Lady Caroline, had no apprehensions that their tranquillity would be in the least disturbed by his second marriage; and that on the contrary, his daughter, who was then on the point of entering into the world, would (he hoped) reap the greatest advantage from such a guide. The event justified his opinion; Lady Caroline, then about sixteen, was charmed with her mother-in-law, and the Duchess equally delighted with her; so that the tenderest friendship ever after subsisted between them. The Duke, in return for her kindness to his daughter, considered Sir Frederic Clanstone as his son; he was indeed deserving of his favour, for a more promising youth I never saw. The frequent opportunities that these young people had of being together, naturally produced an attachment between them; their parents saw, and approved of it; but as Sir Frederic was very little
older

older than Lady Caroline, it was determined, their union should not take place for some years; and with much reluctance he consented to go abroad with the present Duke, who was then setting out on a second tour, in hopes of establishing his health.

The Duchefs had been married two years, when, to the Duke's unspeakable satisfaction, he saw a prospect of an encrease in his family, and she was delivered of Lord William S—; but, alas! this event so joyful in its beginning, ended fatally; she was seized during her confinement with a violent fever: the art of the most eminent of the faculty was exerted in vain; her valuable life could not be saved. If any consolation can be derived from the tender regret, of those we are upon the point of quitting for ever, the poor Duchefs did not want that; for neither the Duke, nor Lady Caroline, (who from the first of her illness had never quitted her a moment) could conceal the excess of their grief. She tried, as well as her feeble condition would permit, to console and reconcile them to their misfortune. In the most pathetic language she bade them farewell. The Duke's favour and protection she besought for her absent son; and after having strained her little infant to her breast, and with uplifted and streaming eyes implored the blessing of Heaven upon it, she ordered the nurse

to deliver it to Lady Caroline. " Cherish," said she, almost inarticulately, " this helpless babe; be more than a sister; be a mother to *my* child. Alas! I hoped to have called you by that fond name, but death—yet you will be happy—my Frederic will—my beloved husband, give me your hand; unite Frederic and Caroline; they will dry your tears; Heaven bless you and my dear children! Fare——" And ere she could finish the word, she ceased to breathe.

I will not, my dear Louisa, as I see you are already extremely affected, describe the violent grief that seized upon the Duke and Lady Caroline; the former never afterwards held up his head, and I wish I could conceal the remainder of this sad story; but it is right you should learn, that the severest calamities may be borne by persons of a pious and exalted turn of mind, and that the exercise of virtue and benevolence, dispenses peace and consolation to the afflicted spirit.

Immediately after the Duchess's death, letters were dispatched to Sir Frederic, to inform him of it, and to recall him home. He and Lord L. were at that time supposed to be at Madrid; but they had left that city, and were gone to Lisbon, before the letters reached them.

The Duke's health seeming to decline, his physicians advised him to breathe the sea air; and
as.

as he had a house near Falmouth, he determined to go there accompanied by Lady Caroline: some little benefit he did find from the sea breezes, and from the warmth of the climate, but his dejection of mind continued; and when he and his daughter in a morning went out to sea in a yacht he had purchased, as was their custom, he would sit silent for hours, with his eyes fixed, sadly ruminating on his irreparable loss.

Lady Caroline too meditated; but though still deeply afflicted, some cheering ideas revived her drooping spirits. She expected daily Sir Frederic to return; she knew his tears certainly would flow, but then together they should lament the amiable Dukes. To him she should present her infant charge; that charge was brother to them both, and how dearly would he be loved! Sometimes even the poor Duke would talk of his Caroline's intended marriage, and with a sigh observe, that it was now, the only event that could give him pleasure, and he wished as much as he now could wish for any thing, for Sir Frederic's arrival.

One day as they were smoothly gliding upon the ocean, about two leagues from the harbour, they descried a vessel, which they were told, was the packet from Lisbon; the possibility that it might bring some intelligence from Sir Frederic, instantly

instantly occurred to Lady Caroline; her eyes were anxiously fixed on the vessel, which every instant brought nearer to her. Soon she fancied, she could discern a figure on deck; he seemed too in mourning; this circumstance produced a violent palpitation in her breast, and seizing hold of a glass the Duke had in his hand, she looked through it. " Good God, 'tis him! yes certainly, 'tis Sir Frederic!" cried she, " Ah! he sees me, he too has a glass, his arms are extended—Ah! Heaven, what joy!" And quite forgetting that she stood on the edge of the deck, she bent forward with her eyes straining to behold this beloved object; when losing her equilibrium, down she fell into the water.

At that fatal moment, Sir Frederic saw her fall; he might too have seen a sailor leap in after her, and catch her in his arms; but this was denied him, for bereft one should imagine of his senses by the sudden shock he had received, he plunged impetuously into the sea, attempting to swim towards the yacht; not reflecting how far it was from him. Some strokes indeed, he did make, but incumbered by a heavy great coat, his efforts to support himself above the water were ineffectual; he was drowned within sight of both the vessels. Those on board the packet, instantly after his desperate action, hoisted out a small boat, and sent it to his assistance, but it came too late,
and

and his body was not found 'till some days after, when it was thrown upon the beach.

The Duke, entirely engrossed by the care Lady Caroline's situation demanded, had not seen this catastrophe, but too soon he heard it; misfortunes had crowded so fast upon him, that they totally destroyed the little remnant of his strength, and he had not the consolation of seeing Lord L—, before he died; that young nobleman had been by severe illness prevented from accompanying Sir Frederic from Lisbon.

As for poor Lady Caroline, she soon recovered from the effects of her unfortunate fall; her father had wrapped her up in a blanket, and laid her on a bed. Her first sensations, when her recollection was restored, were full of joy and delight; "Are we most got back to Falmouth? we shall see him very soon," whispered she to the Duke, who could not suppress a deep sigh. "My dear father," continued she, "we shall yet know some pleasure, my brother and Sir Frederic are arrived."

The poor Duke could not take upon himself the cruel task of undeceiving her; nor did she suspect any fresh misfortune from his sorrowful countenance, for she thought, that the expected interview with the son of his lamented wife, had affected his spirits.

"Not to dwell unnecessarily upon unpleasant events,"

events," continued Doctor Sandolph, " I shall leave you to imagine what Lady Caroline's sufferings must have been, when the truth, though with every tender precaution, was revealed to her! For a long while, her life was despaired of, and her poor afflicted heart never had the comfort of relieving itself by tears, 'till Mrs. Saunders brought Lord William to her; at the sight of that infant the tears gushed from her eyes, and she embraced it with inexpressible tenderness. From that time she began gradually to recover, nor did her father's death, (though a cruel stroke to such an affectionate disposition, and falling on a mind already so oppressed with sorrow) occasion a relapse. She nobly determined to struggle with affliction; you may imagine that a person of such exquisite sensibility, must have had many conflicts with herself, before she could attain tolerable composure; but what may not be compassed by a steady resolution? Lady Caroline never ceases to think with the deepest regret of those beloved objects, of which she was deprived in the course of a very few months; but she submits with pious resignation to the Divine will. Grief has not soured her temper; it has only encreased her natural susceptibility of the woes of others.

Her first wish was to devote her whole time to the care of her infant brother, so tenderly recommended.

mended to her by his mother: she herself, though very young, was by her father's will left entirely to her own discretion, and the Duke, her brother, who was, jointly with her, appointed Lord William's guardian, willingly devolved upon her, his part of the trust, and entreated her to make L. Castle her home.

There Lord William was reared under her eye; there she planned and executed a thousand benevolent schemes, of which Caroline Green is one. These occupy her mind, and diffuse over it some degree of cheerfulness; and having little relish for the gaieties of the world, she passes great part of her time in the country, appropriating a considerable portion of her income (which is large) to charitable institutions. Mrs. Saunders, whose friendship soothed and comforted her in all her distresses, is her constant companion; participates by her active zeal in all her good works, and assists in carrying them into execution.

Several overtures of marriage have been made to Lady Caroline, but she never hesitated in rejecting them. Her affection for Lord William is excessive, and perhaps not a little heightened by his resemblance to the Clanstone family;—him she destines to be her heir, and he reveres and loves her as a mother."

The Doctor ceased, and Louisa, who had more
than

than once shed tears during his recital, heartily thanked him for it. "Amiable Lady Caroline!" cried she, "how judiciously has she chosen to soothe her own sorrows, by lessening those of others! How inefficacious would such a mind have found, the usual methods of dissipation! I ask not, what sort of a young man Lord William is, for I cannot but suppose him amiable with such an example as his sister before him, and he has likewise had the advantage too of your instructions."

"He is, indeed," said Doctor Sandolph, "a charming young man; full of high notions of honour, remarkably sensible——"

"And," interrupted Miss Sandolph, looking significantly at Louisa, "almost as handsome, as polite, and good humoured as Lord Danefield."

Louisa coloured. "Perhaps, Sir, some other day you will favour me with some account of the present Duke and Duchess; why do they live separate?"

"If you are not tired with an old man's loquacity," answered he, "I will gratify your curiosity now, for dinner will not be ready for some time. Louisa expressed her willingness to listen, and Doctor Sandolph related what follows:

"After the death of his father, the present Duke, who entirely recovered his health at Lisbon,
for

for many years indulged himself in a life of unrestrained pleasure and dissipation. During which period, he saw his sister but seldom, for the country was disagreeable to him ; and his affairs by his neglect would have been greatly disarranged, had she not with much prudence, exerted her economical talents to set to rights, what he had taken such pains to perplex, and set wrong. In this respect he is perfectly reformed.

The Duke is, as you know, noble and elegant in his person ; pleasing in his address ; and not deficient in good nature, or understanding ; but unfortunately there is no solidity in his character. This Miss G. whom he married about fifteen years since, experienced ; for though love had decided him in his choice, his natural inconstancy soon occasioned him to slight her. Her temper, haughty and violent, resented the injury, and would not condescend to use any gentle methods to regain his affection ; yet the loss of it, was in her opinion the most heavy calamity that could have befallen her, for she was passionately fond of him.

The Duchess finding home extremely uncomfortable, thought the society of her friend, Miss Blenners, might afford her some consolation ; and she invited her to pass the winter at her house in town.

This arrangement pleased the Duke, who was
glad

glad to be relieved from a *tête-à-tête*, which not seldom produced a violent quarrel.

Miss Blenners was young, extremely pretty, insinuating to a great degree in her manners, apparently wild and thoughtless, with a charming innocence and simplicity in her character, and an inexhaustible stock of good humour. Such she chose to appear. But now mark what she really was. Artful beyond all imagination, with a head full of plot and intrigue, even at those moments, when she seemed most giddy; and if her actions sometimes appeared rather irregular, she feigned such a pretty surprize, and such perfect ignorance that they were liable to any unfavourable construction, that she was instantly acquitted of every thing, but an unlucky giddiness. Her good humour was quite artificial; for when disguise could answer no end, her native petulance and ill humour burst forth, to the no small annoyance of her servants.

Such was Miss Blenners, whom the Duchess doated on with fond affection, and to whom she imparted with the most entire confidence, her dissatisfaction of the Duke's behaviour, her resentment, and yet her unextinguishable passion for him.

Miss Blenners was likewise the Duke's confidante; her soft smiles soothed his mind when ruffled by the Duchess's violence;—she listened to
his

his complaints with pity, and gentle complacency;—to him she lamented that the Duchess possessed such impatience of temper, a spirit so furious and vindictive; but the palliating circumstance of her love for him was suppressed, and a *small* alteration made in the fact, for she was represented, as harbouring the most implacable hatred against him.

Their dissensions, thus heightened and inflamed by this false friend, grew every day more violent; Lady Caroline, who had often reconciled them to each other, was unfortunately in the country; and Miss Blenners, after having gained the confidence of the Duke, finished, by gaining his heart. All her duplicity was insufficient to conceal this circumstance from the Duchess; for however impenetrable and cautious her conduct might be, the Duke, who was less skilled in disguising his sentiments, betrayed them by a thousand unguarded actions; and the Duchess, naturally prone to jealousy, immediately determined on the removal of her rival.

To prevent a disagreeable *eclat*, she secretly wrote to Miss Blenners's father, to desire he would send for his daughter, without mentioning that he had done so, at her request; the reasons she assigned for parting with her friend, were probably
not

not very satisfactory to him, though more so, than the true ones would have been.

The Duke, and Miss Blenners, were much surprized at this sudden separation ; the former durst not oppose it ; and the latter, submitted with chearfulness to her father's commands. But it answered not the end the Duchefs had propos'd ; for the very day that Miss Blenners returned into the country, the Duke vanished ; and what became of him could not for a certainty be known ; sometimes he appeared for a few days in his own house, but from that time lived upon such very distant terms with the Duchefs, that at length she herself solicited a separation, to which he joyfully consented."

" Poor woman !" cried Louisa, " I can't help pitying her ; though I think she did not shew much judgment in her conduct ; but what became of her deceitful friend ?"

" Why, the Duchefs," continued Doctor Sandolph, " who, perhaps, might not have disliked to revenge herself, by publishing her infamous conduct, was deprived of the means of proving it, by the deep art of Miss Blenners, who contrived to keep her character, and to make half the world believe, that all the Duchefs said, were the suggestions of envy and malice ; yet, 'tis suspected, that she continued for some years, to maintain a
secret

secret connection with the Duke, but carried on with so much circumspection, as to escape discovery. The Duke, however, grew tired of her—another flame succeeded, and so on successively. But Miss Blenners did not long survive his infidelity; a cruel disease (perhaps the consequence of secret remorse) cut her off in the prime of life.

“ The Duchess has for several years chiefly resided in the North of England; she has many amiable qualities, though she was deficient in those that constitute the happiness of connubial life. When Lady Caroline S. is in town, and if the former happens to be there, she calls on her frequently; a friendly intercourse has ever subsisted between these ladies, and Lady Caroline has done all in her power to promote a reconciliation between her and the Duke, but hitherto without effect.

“ The Duke’s life now, is much more regular than it used to be; but I am sorry to say, still less so than it ought to be. He is a very dangerous man to those who are unacquainted with his character; for he is so respectful in his behaviour to women, so engaging, and when he pleases, so moral and proper in his conversation, that insensibly he gains their esteem, before they are aware of his designs.

“ Did I not consider you as my child, I should
not

not have spoken with such freedom of my friend and relation ; but some late observations I have made, convince me, that it is my duty to put you on your guard, for, without having the least distrust of your prudence, you might, very innocently, lay yourself open to censure ; as the least intimacy with a man of his turn, sullies, in the opinion of a censorious world, the purity of a young woman's character."

Louisa, grateful for these hints, promised to profit by them : with infinite reluctance she denied herself the pleasure of cultivating Lady Caroline S.'s acquaintance, that she might not put herself in the way of the Duke ; and she even discontinued her morning rambles, for fear of meeting him.

CHAPTER XXI.

EACH morning, since her interview with Lord Danefield, Louisa had awaked with the full persuasion, that another day could not pass without bringing her news of him; and each night she had retired to rest disappointed. Various excuses she had formed for his silence; but now a week having thus passed, she grew tired of finding excuses for a person, who seemed so little desirous of finding any for himself; and convinced that Lord Melvern had prevailed on him to give her up; she reflected with mingled shame and regret, that she had suffered Lord Danefield to perceive the strong interest he had gained in her affections.

In this unpleasant state of mind, she heard, with no small vexation, that the Duke had resolved to give a *fête*, avowedly for her amusement. Most gladly would she have declined, to be distinguished by such a man, but Lady Roseville had in her name already accepted it, and was elated beyond measure at the honour designed her. Poor Louisa now had not one quiet moment; Lady Roseville distracted her, by her busy preparations for this grand occasion: she spared no expence, that folly and vanity could suggest, to procure the most elegant dresses for herself and daughter, who

was entirely passive, and quite indifferent as to her appearance.

But though rather paler than usual, still she looked charming; and as Lord William was expected to come to this *fête*, Lady Roseville flattered herself, that the event she so much desired, could not fail of happening, as soon as he beheld Louisa. Again, however, she was disappointed; for Lord William was detained in town, by unavoidable business.

The company assembled about nine, in the gardens, which were superbly illuminated. Tents were pitched in the park, which contained various refreshments; bands of musicians were concealed behind the trees, and the ball began with great spirit. The Duke had the happiness of dancing with Louisa, who saw with reluctance, that she was evidently the queen of the *fête*. And now she perceived, that Doctor Sandolph's character of the Duke was perfectly just; for in the course of the evening, he neglected no opportunity of making flattering speeches; he was desirous, he said, beyond measure, to obtain her esteem, her confidence; to be considered as her friend. But very different from Lord Pomppoultou; a word, or look, was sufficient to awe his Grace into silence; well knowing, that to persuade a woman of delicacy, that

that she is beloved, she must first be convinced she is respected.

A little before supper, while Louisa was sitting by Lady Caroline S. enjoying a calm and pleasant conversation, she saw a servant approach her mother with a note, which she had no sooner read, than she hurried out of the room; her stay was, however, short; but to Louisa's surprize and consternation, she returned, accompanied by Lord Pompouston! whom she presented to the Duke, and afterwards to Lady Caroline, as her particular friend.

To see Lord Pompouston, in spite of his assurance, disconcerted, by the very cold reception he received from the Duke, could not compensate to Louisa, for the pain inflicted by his presence. He addressed her with less ease in his manner than was customary to him, and willing to account for his unexpected apparition in a family, to whom he was unknown, he said, loud enough for Lady Caroline to hear him, that being on his road to Ireland, and understanding that Doctor Sandolph's house was little out of his way, he had stopped there, to pay his respects to Lady and Miss Roseville; but that finding them from home, he had flattered himself, that under the sanction of his friend Lady Roseville, his intrusion at the castle, during an entertainment, might be forgiven.—

"Your name, Miss Roseville," continued he, "I durst not use on this occasion, for you take care to prevent my becoming vain of your favour."

Louisa, not at all desirous he should lose this opinion, remained silent.

"So," cried he, "you will not even speak to me! 'tis your cruelty that drives me from England—I fly to my native country to forget you."

"That will be no very difficult matter," said Louisa, "especially as you must be convinced, I heartily wish it."

"Yes, yes; you have taken no small pains," cried he, "to prove the little value you set upon your conquest: but a time may come, Madam," his colour rising while he spoke, "when you may repent having disdained such an alliance as mine."

Louisa secretly smiled at his vanity, and making no answer, presently after she saw him sidling towards Lady Roseville, with whom he continued in close conversation till supper; she comforted herself there was no chance of his being invited to the parsonage by Doctor Sandolph, and still less by his niece, who had expressed her dislike of him with her usual acrimony.—Soon after supper he vanished.

The *fête*, whatever delight it had afforded to the neighbouring gentlemen and ladies, had been productive

ductive of little to those, for whom it was principally intended. The Duke had not obtained a single smile from Louisa, and she had experienced nothing but fatigue and vexation, with the disagreeable apprehension, that Lord Pompoultou's long confabulation with her mother, boded her no good.

When the company began to disperse, the Duke insisted on attending Louisa to her carriage.—“This Lord Pompoultou,” said he, “is one of the forwardest men I ever saw; I think I may, without disrespect to you, say this, for he can't be a friend of yours.”

“O no!” cried she, “very far from it.”
 “Well, though he has not the honour of being in your favour,” said the Duke, “’tis easy to perceive, that he adores you; that indeed, is the natural consequence of knowing you, formed as you are to enchant the whole world. Could I only be distinguished as your friend, I would ask no more.”

Louisa, who perfectly understood his drift, politely declined forming any such friendship, alledging, that she had determined to have none but female friends. “Alas!” thought she, “I could have sworn that one man deserved to be excepted from this rule; but—why should I think of him?”

For two days after the *fête*, Lady Roseville's

countenance wore an unusual air of thought; she seemed to be hatching some project, and was observed to be frequently employed at her pen. The third morning at breakfast, having received a large packet of letters, she announced her intention of returning to London the day following, where she was called, she said, by business of the utmost importance.

Doctor Sandolph, after enquiring whether her business could not be delayed, requested the favour of her company for a few moments in his study. There, with the utmost delicacy, he hinted to her, the unpleasant accounts he had heard of the late derangements of her affairs; hoped, that since her debts were paid, or at least in a fair way of being so, that she would alter her mode of living, and not lay herself under fresh difficulties.

He represented to her, the ruinous consequences of play, and the very improper example she set her daughter. He gently glanced at her intimacy with Sir Ralph Random; observing, that the world took the liberty to animadvert upon it, in a manner, which, if she could hear, must shock her extremely; and though charity induced him to suppose it was perfectly innocent, yet, as the person honoured with the confidence of the late Lady Roseville, he must oppose Miss Roseville's continuance with her, if she did not pay more attention

attention to her character. And he concluded, by assuring her, that the court of Chancery would certainly deprive her, of the trust committed to her, if they discovered that her conduct was exceptionable. Then, after apologizing for the freedom he had taken, he added, “ to have forborne, Madam, telling you these disagreeable truths, would have been inconsistent with my character as an honest man, and as a friend of your family: believe me, I have no other view, than to promote your honour and happiness, as well as your amiable daughter’s; and at any time, either of you may command my services; for old as I am, I should think nothing a trouble that I could do, to be of the least use to my dear departed friend’s wife and daughter.”

During this lecture, which Lady Roseville secretly denominated a most impertinent one, she had, with no small difficulty, stifled her anger, which was the greater, because her conscience told her she deserved still severer reprehensions; and this interior voice confusing her, rendered her justification, which she attempted, extremely lame and awkward.

But, wishing to part amicably with Doctor Sandolph, she made no sort of scruple, to promise whatever he desired; well knowing she could dis-

penſe with the performance, as ſoon as it ſuited her inclination.

Doctor Sandolph next ſaw Louiſa a moment alone ;—after relating what had paſſed, he added, “ your mother, my dear child, makes very fair promiſes ; we ought to ſuppoſe her ſincere. Let us try for a few months how ſhe will go on. You may perceive your reſidence here (I ſpeak it to my ſorrow) never would do—my niece has a good heart, and is clever ; but ſhe has an unfortunate aſperity in her humour, that ſooner or later you would feel ; the ſweetneſs of your’s, might indeed qualify this ; but what can render the Duke’s neighbourhood eligible to youth and beauty ? I need not enlarge upon this topic, as you muſt already have obſerved in him ſome *traits* of the character I reluctantly drew.”

Louiſa, who aſſented to her venerable friend’s propoſitions, aſſured him of her reliance on his prudence to direct her conduct. She would have diſcloſed to him the ſecret griefs with which her heart was ſurcharged ; but ſhe was withheld, partly by a ſentiment of pride, and partly by a tenderneſs ſhe could not reſreſs, which whiſpered her, not to condemn Lord Daneſfield unheard.

The parting between her and Doctor Sandolph, was equally affectionate on both ſides. Miſs Sandolph too, expreſſed the greateſt regret, at loſing ſuch

such a charming companion ; but did not suffer Lady Roseville to imagine, that she was included in this, for she had invariably shewn, without the least disguise, as much contempt for the mother, as admiration for the daughter.

As time would not allow the ladies to take a formal leave of the castle, they left a note behind them for Lady Caroline, whom Louisa considered as the most amiable, as well as exalted character, she had yet seen.

Louisa left Stretly with regret ; she had derived much delight from the acquaintance she had made with Lady Caroline S. she had been caressed with affection almost paternal by Doctor Sandolph, and she had no cause to complain of his niece.

As the chaise moved along, she bent her head forward, to cast a farewell look at the terrace ; and fancied she could distinguish the spot where she had listened to Lord Danefield's tender declaration ; then contrasting that with his extraordinary silence, sadness and amazement filled her whole soul.

The sight of London was not likely to raise her spirits ; it was the middle of August. The streets were almost empty ; all the beaux and belles had vanished ; only here and there a few shabby figures, seemingly over-powered with heat and fatigue, slowly stalked along ; none looked gay and alert, except painters and bricklayers employed in re-

parations. From every quarter arose clouds of dust, and such a compound of stench, as nearly to threaten suffocation. No noise was heard, but the fretful whimpering of children, the shrill summer cries, and the slow rumbling of one or two hackney coaches.

Why Lady Roseville chose to come to a place so disagreeable, at this season, was to Louisa totally incomprehensible. Her darling friend, Lady Bridget, was at Tunbridge, trying to persuade people of her niece's superior accomplishments; and Sir Ralph Random no longer appeared in Portman-square; Lady Roseville (to Louisa's surprise) never even mentioned his name. Play was out of the question, for there was nobody to play with, had she forgotten her promise to Doctor Sandolph. Vauxhall indeed, and the summer theatres, were open; but without an agreeable party, offered no great temptation to a woman of her turn. She seemed, however, in high good humour, drove out every morning, sometimes alone, and sometimes accompanied by Louisa; and the friends and acquaintance of both being in the country, they depended solely on each other for society.

Lady Roseville now would frequently have recourse to her for amusement; Louisa played to her, read to her, and exerted all her talents to

amuse a person, incapable of amusing herself; and for the first time, since her disappointment when she came from abroad, our amiable heroine indulged a hope of inspiring her mother with some degree of tenderness. Far from attributing the change she perceived in Lady Roseville's conduct, wholly to the circumstances of the moment, she was willing to give the credit of it, to Doctor Sandolph's good advice; and she hastened to impart to him, with much satisfaction, the pleasing alteration it had wrought.

His disposition, naturally sanguine, readily believed this reformation; and he informed his ward, that since she was, going on so comfortably at home, and not likely to have any immediate occasion for his service, he should comply with a request of the Duke of L—'s, and with his niece, accompany him and Lady Caroline, on a tour thro' Wales, which probably would detain him about six weeks from home.

Lady Roseville and Louisa had been in town near a fortnight; and the latter, one morning, was reading one of Miss Burney's charming novels aloud, when a servant announced Mrs. Dinley; "Who, who?" cried Lady Roseville, rising in a wild hurried manner, "did you say, Mrs. Dinley?" "Yes, my Lady, and she is upon the stairs."

Immediately after, a tall fallow complexioned woman entered, who flew with extended arms to embrace Lady Roseville; but Louisa thought her mother did not heartily return the salute. "Is this," said Mrs. Dinley, "Miss Roseville? I beg you will present me to her;" and her small eyes twinkled, and a sort of simper appeared on her face, which brought a most flaming colour on that of her friend.

"Well, how time passes!" cried Mrs. Dinley; "it seems but t'other day, when this fine young woman was an infant in my arms!" and approaching her chair to Lady Roseville's, she whispered something with a smile, upon which the former frowned very significantly, as if to impose silence. Some indifferent chat now took place; and Louisa, who perceived this must be a very old and intimate acquaintance of her mother's, though she could not recollect having ever heard of her before, discreetly withdrew.

Mr. Bangrove, who had been out of town, came by engagement that day to dine in Portman-square. Louisa immediately perceived his presence was very unwelcome to her mother: and upon his saluting Mrs. Dinley (who had invited herself to dinner) with all the satisfaction of a person that meets an intimate acquaintance, Lady Roseville exclaimed, looking with amazement at them

them both, " Good God! how long have you two been acquainted?"

" O a great while," replied Mrs. Dinley; " he is my husband's relation, and has sometimes been with us in the country."

Lady Roseville, during dinner, was frequently extremely absent, but seemed to constrain herself to behave with more than ordinary civility to Bangrove, and to persuade Mrs. Dinley, that she was prodigiously happy at this unexpected visit.

" And pray," said she, with a particular sort of smile, which Louisa, by observation, knew she never put on, but to disguise vexation, " what brought you to town, my dear friend, and where are you to be?"

" I came to transact some business for Mr. Dinley, which he could not execute himself, on account of the gout. Poor man! he has been confined to the house these three months. I called upon you, Mr. Bangrove," continued she, " before I came hither, but you were not yet come from your house at Chelsea; however, to-morrow, I must see you, and beg you will appoint a time for our meeting."

" Oh, I shall be at my chambers all the morning," answered he, " and be particularly glad to receive you."

This point settled, Mrs. Dinley told Lady Rose-

Roseville, that she had provided herself with no lodging, having only two nights to stay in town; and not in the least doubting, but that her dear friend would give her a bed. Lady Roseville, looking extremely disconcerted, said, she was immensely unfortunate, for that she really did not know how she could accommodate her.

"O you know I am not very nice; one of your servants rooms will do well enough."

"But most of the beds are taken down to be cleaned."

"A few must, however, be still up," said Mrs. Dinley, smiling; "and remember how many years, you and I slept constantly together!"

This hint determined Lady Roseville to submit to a visit she could not decline; and she hastened to call another subject, dreading Mrs. Dinley's recurring again to old times.

It was now Louisa's turn to be embarrassed: for all at once, Bangrove asked her, what was become of Lord Danesfield? "How should she know?" said Lady Roseville, peevishly.

"Nay, I can't tell; but I thought it not absolutely impossible she might"—and a smile, which accompanied these words, made Louisa blush.

"Lord Melvern," continued Bangrove, "has been extremely ill, and went abroad in a great hurry; perhaps, Lord Danesfield is gone to him."

"And

"And what of that," interrupted Lady Roseville, "who cares where he goes?"

Louisa was not quite of that opinion; and from that moment began to think he was abroad, and that his letters coming thence had miscarried. She thought it too somewhat singular, that her mother should seem quite angry, at the mere mention of Lord Danefield's name.

Early in the evening, Bangrove went away; but just as he was going, Mrs. Dinley ran after him, and whispered in his ear; Louisa saw him nod his head, and wink slyly; Lady Roseville too observed this, and turning very pale, took out her salts, and smelt to them. Louisa, apprehending she was ill, hastened to her kindly, enquiring what ailed her. But with a repulsive motion of her hand, she dismissed her, saying, "'tis nothing, nothing at all. There's thunder in the air, I fancy, which always affects me."

And Mrs. Dinley being re-seated, Louisa left the friends, as they chose to call themselves, to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* till supper. But she had no reason to think, when she joined them, that it had been productive of much satisfaction to either, especially to her mother, who seemed low and dejected, not to say tired of her companion.

At night, according to the arrangement Lady Roseville had made, Mrs. Dinley took possession
of

of Louisa's chamber, and she herself slept in a little tent bed in her mother's apartment, though there was more than one vacant chamber in the house; but Lady Roseville seemed determined, to have her daughter under her own eye. Louisa, whether owing to change of bed, or from some other cause, rested ill, and she found Lady Roseville did the same; for during the night, she was alarmed at hearing her sigh most deeply, and afterwards when she seemed asleep, she frequently groaned, and muttered something indistinctly to herself; once exclaiming, "O! Sir Edward! Sir Edward!"

In the morning, Lady Roseville looked so pale and unrefreshed, that Louisa tenderly expressed a wish that she would not rise, offering to go down and make Mrs. Dinley's breakfast; but she was not suffered to stir, 'till Lady Roseville herself was ready; and she observed great care was taken to prevent her being alone with Mrs. Dinley, who, as soon as breakfast was over, went out in Lady Roseville's carriage, which she desired to borrow; her Ladyship went out in a chair soon after, and Louisa staid at home to practise some new music.

But she soon found her mind untuned to harmony, and disposed only to ruminate on the strange mysteriousness of her mother's behaviour. In vain she perplexed herself with trying to explain

it;

it; yet, she was convinced that the secret dissatisfaction, which she had discovered Lady Roseville felt at Mrs. Dinley's visit, must proceed from some other cause, than mere caprice; and she had remarked with what studious care she endeavoured to disguise it, under the appearance of fondness and delight. That she should think it necessary to feign these sentiments for such a woman as Mrs. Dinley appeared, amazed Louisa, but not so much as the extraordinary perturbation of her spirits during the night, and her vigilant attention to keep her at a distance from her. The glances too that Bangrove and Mrs. Dinley had interchanged; his nods and winks had not escaped her notice, and she concluded with believing, *he* could account for all that puzzled her.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE morning was nearly spent, and Louisa was just going to take a turn round the square; when Bangrove bolted into the parlour. "I crave pardon, Madam," cried he, "for this intrusion, but I thought Mrs. Dinley might be here. What is not she come home yet?"

Louisa replied in the negative.

"'Tis very unlucky, for I forgot to mention to her a very material part of our business; somehow or other, we got talking over old stories;" continued he, with a smile; "but see her I must, so I'll wait for her here."

Louisa almost longed to make some enquiries about Mrs. Dinley, when Bangrove said.

"Pray Madam, did you believe that Lady Roseville, was really happy to see this old friend of her's!"

"I suppose she was; I know not why she should not be so."

"Ha, ha! you little know her Ladyship—She would rather have seen the devil; times are much altered since she was so fond of Jenny Watkyns."

"Watkyns! do you say her name was Watkyns, Mr. Bangrove?" asked Louisa, gasping almost for breath.

"Yes,

" Yes ; Watkyns ; Jenny Watkyns ; and what of that, Madam ? you never could have known her, I am sure."

No, Sir ; but where did she live before she married ?" asked Louisa, with a tremulous voice.

" At Cambridge, Madam ; both your mother and she resided there with an old Mrs. Thompson, aunt to the former."

This account struck Louisa to the heart ; from the beginning of his discourse, a fatal suspicion had arisen in her mind, which was but too well confirmed in the sequel. A sickness now came over her. Bangrove alarmed at her change of countenance, ran hastily for a glass of water. She drank it, and attempted to retire, but she was still weak and trembling, which obliged her to resume her seat.

Bangrove looked confounded. " May I take the liberty of asking you, Miss Roseville," said he, " if you have ever——But 'tis impossible," muttered he, breaking off abruptly.

" What is impossible, Sir ?"

" Nothing, nothing at all, Madam. I was going to ask a very silly question, but I recollect you never saw Mrs. Dinley 'till yesterday. Surely you cannot possibly have had any correspondence with her."

" No, Sir ; she is an entire stranger to me, nor
did

did I ever hear Lady Roseville name her in my life."

"I dare say you never did;" said he with a sneer, "and you may as well not tell her, that we have been talking about her friend: yet I should like to know——"

At this instant Lady Roseville appeared, who almost started, when she saw Bangrove alone with her daughter; however she said nothing, and Mrs. Dinley soon following her, Bangrove had no opportunity to learn the cause of Louisa's late agitation.

The name of Jenny Watkyns had flashed a ray of light, which dispelled the darkness in which Lady Roseville had involved her actions; and poor Louisa, to her inexpressible mortification, discovered that Prince Ormanzoff's faithless mistress, the unprincipled Charlotte, was——she blushed even to own it to herself——her own mother! Bangrove too, she was certain knew her infamous story; all his odd hints, and those speeches formerly so unintelligible, were now but too clear! The recollection of Prince Ormanzoff, (her much lamented friend) now revived with tender sorrow, and she could account for the partial regard he had shewn her, by supposing he had thought her like the woman, he had once so passionately loved: others had discovered the same resemblance. She
was

was certain however, that he could not have known the affinity betwixt them; because when her mother married, both her husband and his father, then bore the name of Temple; and it was not 'till three years after, that they changed *that* for Roseville, which name they took pursuant to the will of her grandmother's brother, who, dying childless, bequeathed a very large estate to Sir John Temple, (her grandfather) upon condition that himself, and his descendants, should bear the name of Roseville.

This piece of family history, was not likely to reach the ears of Prince *Ormanzoff*, a foreigner wandering about the world; and who after he had seen Miss Watkyns, and learnt the mortifying particulars of Charlotte's infidelity, had probably forbore to make further enquiries about her.

Besides too, Louisa was perfectly convinced, that if he had entertained the least suspicion that his English friends were so nearly connected with Charlotte, he would most carefully have concealed from them, circumstances too indelicate for them to hear. And such had been his apprehension of injuring the honour, or wounding the peace of any part of Charlotte's family, that he had guarded against casualties, by cautiously avoiding the mention of any name throughout his fragment, except that of Watkyns; a person not materially concerned in his relation.

Louisa

Louisa now could not wonder that the sight of this witness of her shame, should have affected her mother so disagreeably, and that she should have dreaded the indiscretion of her tongue, which seemed of the tatling order.

Nor was she surprized to see her, at Mrs. Dinley's departure, loading her with presents to reward the past, and secure her future silence.

Diffimulation ceased after Mrs. Dinley was gone. Lady Roseville spoke of her indeed, as the best of creatures, and as her oldest and most valued friend; but added, that she was not accustomed to live in the world, and that she should be shocked to death to appear with her in public; and finished by saying, she was a frightful old fashioned figure.

Nothing but the excellent principles with which her mind was stored, could have enabled Louisa to behave to her mother with the same dutious and affectionate attentions, as she had done before the fatal discovery, which, added to other griefs, totally depressed her spirits.

While she was musing in a very melancholy mood in her own apartment, Lady Roseville came in with a letter in her hand, "Here," said she, "is a very kind and pressing invitation from Lady Dalhaway, to desire we would come to her at Fairley. I am sure you will be glad to leave this

hot unpleasant town; her house is in Bedfordshire, only fifty miles from London; so that the journey will be nothing, and we may pass a week with her, without any hurt to my business."

Louisa acquiesced; and the next day but one, was fixed for the journey. Lady Roseville however, suddenly recollected that she had just sent her coach to be repaired; but she settled that she could easily borrow a chaise, and send the maids by the stage.

The weather at that time happened to be uncommonly sultry, and the evening before they left London, Lady Roseville complained extremely of the heat, anticipating what she should suffer on her journey the next day. "Dear me!" cried she, "instead of travelling with a broiling sun, I protest, I think it would be a very good scheme to set out after supper to night; we should then get to Fairley by breakfast time, and it would be quite delicious travelling by moon-light. Why should not we do it?"

Louisa had no objection to make, she was quite indifferent when they set out: so her mother immediately gave the necessary orders.

They supped about twelve, and Lady Roseville retired afterwards to her own apartment, just to write a few lines, saying she should be ready in half an hour. But before that time was elapsed, Mrs. Lacely ran up stairs to tell Louisa, that her
mother

mother was waiting for her in the carriage, who hurried down not to make her wait, and the moment she was got into the chaise, it drove off.

The moon was not yet risen, and the lamps gave but a dim light; however, she saw that Lady Roseville had bundled herself up in a singular manner, and that she held a handkerchief before her mouth; she therefore naturally concluded her mother had a return of the tooth-ach, which she had of late complained of frequently.

Louisa could not help observing with regret, the needless expence of four horses to a carriage with scarcely any baggage, nor did she see the necessity of going at a most furious rate.

“ Lord bless me, Madam! how the men drive!” cried she; “ surely it can’t be agreeable to you, to fly along in this manner!”

Lady Roseville made no answer, motioning with her hand that she could not speak. But Louisa quite terrified, let down the front glass, and attempted to call to the postillions to slacken their pace; probably they did not hear her, so she leant out of the carriage, in hopes of making herself heard by her mother’s servant: but a loud laugh in a masculine voice, issuing from her companion, made her start back with horror, and to her utter confusion and amazement, she perceived she was travelling with Lord Pompoufton!

He

He had just slipped off a petticoat, cloak, and bonnet, which she knew belonged to her mother, and assumed his natural appearance. Oh God! what treachery is this!" exclaimed poor Louisa, "let me out! let me out this instant!"

"Not yet;" cried he, "sit quiet my love, and don't alarm yourself."

"Tell me, O, tell me; whither are you carrying me; and how came you here?"

"You shall know all in good time, my angel," said he, throwing an arm round her waist in spite of all her struggles. "The post-boys won't mind you, so what signifies screaming; resolve therefore, to submit with a good-grace to your fate! not a very severe one, since I am carrying you to Scotland, to make you my wife."

"I'll die ten thousand deaths first! vile traitor; let me go this minute!"

"No tragical flights, I beseech you, unless you find they afford your mind any relief; for on me, they will have no effect."

"Nor shall this vile treachery effect your purpose," cried Louisa.

"Well then, if you will not be my wife, you shall at least be my mistress. Yes, haughty as you are, I shall find the means of humbling you. Remember, I warned you, that you would repent your saucy disdain of me."

“ O never, never ; detested wretch ! Thank God,” said she, bursting into a passion of tears, “ thank God, I am in a free country ; an heiress too ;—no clergyman will dare to marry me, and the Court of Chancery will save me from your violence. I vow and protest, Lord Pompoultou, nothing you can do, shall force me to be yours.”

“ O, you will think better of this in the course of your journey ; ’tis long enough to afford leisure for reflection. In former times, ladies might be carried off, and travel half over the world with their ravishers, without any detriment to their character ; but in the present age, we are more nice and scrupulous ; a young lady, after she has taken a trip to Scotland, *bon grê, mal grê*, cannot appear with credit in the world, (except in romance) unless the priest has made her honour whole. Therefore, my sweet Louisa, with your good sense you will perceive, that after we have sociably travelled night and day together some hundreds of miles, we cannot fail of returning man and wife : even your friend Lord Danesfield, would advise this measure, circumstanced as you will be.”

Poor Louisa’s grief now choaked her words ; the detested Lord Pompoultou had in this speech stabbed her with a thousand daggers ; and in an agony which almost deprived her of reason, she

she repeatedly murmured out Lord Danefield's name.

Lord Pompoufton could not diftinguifh exactly what ſhe ſaid, but his rival's name caught his ear.

“ Why think of Danefield? he can't hear your lamentations, nor can he take you from me. Indeed, he little thinks, that like a wolf, I am carrying off his tender lamb, while he is rambling abroad.”

“ Wretch!” emphatically exclaimed Louifa. Lord Pompoufton continued, “ the whole world united ſhould not prevail on me to relinquiſh you; therefore be pacified, and exhort yourſelf to return my love, as you ought. For, offended as I have reaſon to be with you, 'tis in your power to ſoften my heart. I ſtill adore you; doat upon you even to madneſs:—come, give me your hand, and let us be friends.”

Louifa diſdainfully pushed his, which he held out, from her; and ſunk in ſilence into the corner of the chaiſe. The natural energy of her mind revived, after ſhe had relieved herſelf by a copious ſhower of tears, and ſhe conſidered what ſhe could do, to avoid the threatened evil. “ 'Tis impoſſible thought ſhe, “ that in ſo long a journey, I ſhould find no opportunity of making myſelf ſome friend; and if am but as reſolute as this monſter, I may yet baffle him—Heaven will not deſert innocence; in that alone, I truſt!”

Then considering that the horses must soon be changed, she hoped at that moment to make herself heard. But Lord Pompoufton had taken his measures too well, not to disappoint this hope. The chaise did not stop at Barnet, but went rapidly through the town, and at a little distance from it, horses were in waiting.

When Lord Pompoufton holding her down on the seat, prevented her screams being heard, by brutally putting a handkerchief over her mouth. This last outrage totally overpowered Louisa's spirits, who renewed her lamentations, when the carriage was again in motion ; and though her spirit could ill brook any submission to her odious conductor, yet she thought it would be wrong not to try (hopeless as it seemed) to soften him.

"Hear me, Lord Pompoufton," cried she, with her hands clasped, and her fine eyes swimming in tears ; "hear me, I conjure you. If you don't wish my death, if you have one spark of compassion in your breast, oh ! desist from this barbarous undertaking—I cannot, indeed I cannot, be your wife ; my heart revolts at the idea. What then can you gain by this journey ; for depend upon it, I shall persist in refusing you ? Therefore release me, dear Lord Pompoufton ; for Heaven's sake let me go." And she attempted to fling herself upon her knees before him.

"Miraculous

“ Miraculous change! did I hear right?” exclaimed he; “ Surely, you did not condescend to honour *me* with that epithet; pray don’t demean yourself by kneeling. If kneeling would melt your flinty heart, I too would kneel; what would I not do to gain one kind look? At this moment you look more charming than ever! such spirit, such animation, such eloquence in every gesture! Ah! how much are you to be preferred to those pieces of still life, which are called beauties!”

Louisa, without seeming to notice these exclamations, continued, “ I will forgive this atrocious act, I will even consent to see you occasionally, nay, even my hatred shall give way to sentiments of gratitude, if you will carry me back to London immediately. Be assured, that next to not committing an error, is speedily to repent having intended it; such a triumph over your passions, would be truly noble. Ah! my Lord, be not obdurate; do not drive me to despair; betrayed as I have been by *her* who ought to have protected me! do but consider what a dishonourable action you are committing; how unworthy a man of fashion. Be persuaded the whole world will condemn you; and however wretched you may make me, that you will yourself be more unhappy, because your conscience will incessantly reproach you with this action.”

Much more did Louisa add in the same style ; but so far from operating as she wished, it only occasioned Lord Pompoultou to break forth into such demonstrations of love, as obliged her once more to have recourse to silence.

They had now got beyond Biggleswade, and not finding the horses ready, where they had been ordered, Lord Pompoultou became furious ; and after dispatching two servants to hasten their arrival, he jumped out of the carriage to watch for them himself. His being in such a hurry, proceeded merely from the impatience of his disposition, and his great anxiety to call Louisa his own ; for he had no pursuit to apprehend.

As he was stepping out of the chaise, Louisa perceived at a little distance two horsemen. " Now, or never ;" thought she, " is the moment come for me to cry out." So bending forwards, she screamed with all her might. Instantly Lord Pompoultou, with a bitter execration on his tongue, bounced back into the carriage ; " you little fury," cried he, " upon my soul I'll shoot you, if you don't sit as quiet as a mouse !" And he produced a pistol.

Whether Louisa did not think him quite wicked enough to execute his threat ; or, whether being grown desperate, it had no effect upon her, certain
it

it is, that she again screamed out, "Murder! murder!"

Lord Pompoufton had haftily drawn up the blind, and a few moments after, two or three fmart raps, as if made with the butt end of a whip, were heard, and at the fame time a very fonorous voice demanded what was the matter.

No answer being made, for a reafon that may eafily be gueffed, "Let down the blind, I fay; I will know who is in this carriage."

Lord Pompoufton now let down the blind, and bending forwards over Louifa, "Who is it that pretumes to ask thefe fingular queftions?" cried he, haughtily; and in a milder tone, he added, "If you muft be fatisfied, and my unhappy fituation muft be made public, know, that the noife you heard, came from this poor lunatic, who, alas! is my wife."

"No, no, no;" cried Louifa, "I am no lunatic, and indeed, I am not his wife! Oh! help for mercy!" "If I fee right," faid the ftranger, applying his glafs to his eye, "you are Lord Pompoufton; and I never knew that you were married."

"That's very poffible; but 'tis true, nevertheless." Louifa moft vehemently continuing her denial, the ftranger faid, he muft infift upon feeing Lady Pompoufton.

"Upon my word, Sir, cried Lord Pompoufton
F 4
angrily,

angrily, " your curiosity is extremely impertinent ; and I beg you will go about your business."

" I shall not stir 'till I have fathomed this mystery ;" said the stranger with a resolute air ; " Nor shall the horses be put to ; and as a magistrate of the county of Bedford, I shall commit to goal," seeing Lord Pompoultton's servants advance, " any person who dares to insult me."

" This is not to be borne," cried Lord Pompoultton, leaping out of the chaise with a pistol in his hand ; " the fellow of this," added he, with an air of defiance, " is at your service."

The gentleman had alighted. " Before I accept your challenge," said he, " I shall first speak to the Lady, who has the best claim to my attention." And he attempted to open the chaise door, but Lord Pompoultton losing all patience, pushed him so rudely, that he staggered, and nearly fell down. At that instant honest John, the gentleman's groom, firing with rage at the insult, discharged such a stroke of his whip over his Lordship's head, as knocked him senseless to the ground ; the pistol going off, as he was in the act of falling. The stranger, not well pleased at his servant's interference, though it had been occasioned by zeal for his safety, commanded him to be quiet, and turning to Lord Pompoultton's servants, who had shewn no desire to hazard their persons in his quarrel,

quarrel, "Take care of your Lord," said he, with an air so stern, and yet so majestic, as filled them with awe. And submissively they directed their attention to Lord Pompouston, who lay bleeding on the ground, without any sign of life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LORD Pompoufton now being *hors du combat*, the stranger went to the chaise, and found Louifa exhausted, and fainting, sunk to the bottom. He raifed her up, and fupporting her with his arms, called to John to try if he could not get a little water. John in an instant was out of fight, and brought his cap full, fome of which being fprinkled on her face, at laft ſhe opened her eyes, and turning them wildly round, “ Oh God ! who is killed ? ” cried ſhe.

“ Nobody, Madam ; compoſe your ſpirits, and tell me truly, is Lord Pompoufton your huſband ? ”

“ O no ; upon my honour he is not—but where is he ? am I ſecure from his violence ? ”

“ Perfectly ; you are under my protection—Lord Pompoufton is not, I hope, materially hurt ; but he is incapacitated from hurting you.”

“ God be praifed ! O Sir, how ſhall I thank you ſufficiently for this deliverance ! but good Heaven ! ſurely, if I miſtake not, I have ſeen you before—I think I recollect your features.”

“ You do, Madam ; I once was much obliged to you, and rejoice that chance has enabled me to repay the obligation.”

In this gentleman, Louifa recognized the per-
ſon

son who had been taken ill in the fields, and whose behaviour she had thought so very singular.

" Since Lord Pompouston," said he, " has no legal right over your person, and seemed carrying you off by force, I suppose, Madam, you will be glad to hasten back to your friends—whither shall I have the honour of conducting you ?"

" Any where in the world that you please, provided I do but escape from him."

" 'Tis you, Madam, that must decide where that shall be ; I should naturally have proposed Portman-square."

" No, Sir, I can't go there ; nor alas ! do I know whither to go."

" Well, you will consider of that, in your way back to Biggleswade : you may, without scruple, make use of his Lordship's chaise to carry you thus far, and then proceed in an hired one."

The stranger, after telling Lord Pompouston's servants, that he would send the chaise back immediately, advised one of them to fetch a surgeon to bleed his Lordship ; and left a card to be given him when he recovered, on which his name, and place of abode, were printed.

After which, the chaise proceeded to Biggleswade, attended by the gentleman, and his groom on horseback. During the way, Louisa considered with much perplexity how she should dis-

pose of herself—to return to her mother was impossible; she had forfeited every pretension to her love and confidence; and by an unlucky chance, she could not find an asylum at Stretly; both Doctor Sandolph and his niece being absent. To seek Mrs. Raby's protection was then the measure she resolved upon, and to go forthwith to Mr. Melcomb's house in Hertfordshire, whence her friend had dated her last letter.

Arrived at Biggleswade—the stranger, after handing Louisa out of the chaise, ordered the postillions to hasten back with it to the place where they had left Lord Pompouston; and then he pressed his fair charge to take some breakfast: she consented to swallow a cup of tea, but was very impatient to proceed, not thinking herself secure, so near Lord Pompouston. The stranger, smiling at her apprehensions, assured her, it was impossible that his Lordship should be, for some time, sufficiently recovered, to form any plan to recover his treasure; and begged she would not distrust either his ability, or his inclination, to defend her from violence.

Louisa gratefully acknowledged, she had experienced both, and informed him of her plan. He would fain have persuaded her to take some hours repose, before she set out; but she was so earnest to be gone, that he ordered a chaise immediately.

diately. He insisted still upon being her escort, and proposed, that she should take with her, the landlady's niece, a pretty sort of a young woman, who had already been very officious in her little attentions about her, and whose company might not be amiss in the perturbed state of her spirits.

To this Louisa readily acceded—she had now an opportunity of learning the stranger's name, which in her flurry, she had hitherto forgotten to ask; indeed she had repeatedly heard him called Sir Charles; “but what is his surname?” said she; and to her infinite surprize, she learned *that* to be Roseville. “I thought, Madam,” added the young woman, “that I heard his honour call you by the same name.”

Louisa allowed it to be her name; but felt ashamed to own herself his relation, since he had not deigned to acknowledge her as such. She thought it singular, that Providence had twice brought together, in such extraordinary circumstances, two near relations, who but for these, would have continued estranged from each other.

But how great was her disappointment, when she found only Mr. Melcomb, with a numerous party of male friends, preparing for a cricket match; and that she learned, that Mrs. Raby was gone to Weymouth, on account of her son's health,

health, who had been indisposed some time ; nor was he certain how long she might stay there, as she had talked of making some visits in the neighbourhood, as soon as little Frank got better. Mr. Melcomb indeed, pressed her warmly to remain with him, till his sister returned ; but this she politely declined. She saw, during a visit of half an hour, that she already trespassed upon his time, and that his friends heartily wished her gone ; yet, fearful of incommoding Sir Charles, she knew not what to do.

He pitied her distress ; and proposed to her, as the evening would soon close in, to go as far as Hatfield, and then proceed wherever she pleased the next day. To this she consented, glad to get from Melcomb's gay and boisterous companions, and so compleatly weary, that immediately after her arrival at Hatfield, she went to bed. Overpowered with excessive fatigue, she soon dropped asleep, gratefully reflecting, that her reliance on the Divine interposition, had not been disappointed.

At ten o'clock the next morning, she was ready to receive Sir Charles, who breakfasted with her. Though he had forborne to ask her any questions, she could not but imagine he must have some curiosity to know how she came into such an extraordinary situation, as that from which he had extricated

extricated her ; and that her refusal of returning to her mother, must have greatly surprized him.

Melcomb had been amazed at her abrupt appearance, and taking him apart, she had, in a few words, explained the cause to him : her natural frankness, and a desire of clearing her own conduct from suspicion, induced her to be equally explicit with Sir Charles, though it was not without very painful sensations, that she prevailed on herself, to reveal her mother's vileness ; which however, she extenuated, as far as truth would permit.

Sir Charles listened to her attentively ; and observed, when she had ended, that Lady Roseville's conduct did not amaze him in the least, as he had long known her to be thoroughly unprincipled, and never troubled with any conscientious scruples. " I am concerned," added he, " to say this to you, whose sentiments seem so refined—one thing alone surprizes me ; which is, that you should be so totally different from her, as even to interest me in your fate—an event I never thought probable : however, I know you have lived very little with her, and that the late Lady Roseville) (though very unkind to me) was extremely capable of forming an amiable young person."

Louisa next imparted to him, the disagreeable dilemma she was in where to find an asylum.

" I should be happy, Madam, to offer you one

at my house," said Sir Charles, "were it a suitable residence for a young lady; but I have no female in my family, and have a son not many years older than yourself; therefore, it is uneligible. But have you no friend that will receive you, unconnected with your mother? for I would not advise you to seek the protection of any of her intimates; most of them are of her own stamp, and would not scruple to betray you."

Louisa was of the same opinion. "Alas! Sir," said she, "I have so few acquaintance in England, and those few being at a distance from London, that really I know not whither to go. There is indeed a milliner of excellent character, whom I have occasionally seen; I think I had better go and lodge at her house, till I can hear from Mrs. Raby, whether it is convenient for her to receive me at Weymouth."

"A milliner's house, Madam, is not exactly the thing for a young lady of your figure; however, as you do not mean to continue with her, perhaps there may be no impropriety in your lodging at her house for a few days, till you can receive Mrs. Raby's answer."

The carriage now drew up to the door, and Louisa having prevailed on Miss Barton, who had come with her from Biggleswade, to accompany her to London, proceeded thither; and Sir Charles

Charles, to relieve her from all apprehensions, that his attendance on her, might be inconvenient to himself, assured her, that when he had the good fortune to meet her, he was then on his way to town.

Miss Barton enlarged much upon the excellent character Sir Charles bore in Bedfordshire ; and said, the people of that county regretted extremely that he did not always live amongst them ; but, continued she, “ that cannot be expected, as Roseville, his family seat, is a much finer place than that near Biggleswade.”

Mrs. de Vaux was extremely surprized when Louisa stopt at her door, to hear she wished to lodge with her. “ Dear me, Madam ! I have very bad accommodations to offer you,” cried she.

“ Well, no matter ;” said Louisa, “ such as they are, I must put up with them.”

“ Why, Madam,” said Mrs. de Vaux, after a moment of reflection, “ why should not you go to Mrs. Stanford ? I am sure she would be happy to receive you.”

“ Is she then in town ?” asked Louisa, much pleased with the scheme.

“ She came the day before yesterday ; has had an alarming pain in one of her eyes, and Captain Stanford insisted upon her coming to consult the great oculist in the city ; but if you will give me
leave,

leave, I will run to her lodgings in Pall Mall, and tell her you are here."

Louisa assented; and while she was gone, told Sir Charles Mrs. Stanford's little history, who was immediately of opinion, that if she could be with her, it would be far preferable than being at a milliners.

Mrs. Stanford, attended by Mrs. de Vaux, arrived presently after in a hackney coach; she embraced Louisa tenderly, and expressed the warmest desire to have her for a guest; telling her that she was in her old lodgings in Pall-Mall; "where," continued she, "there is a very pretty room over mine, which Lord Danefield occupied when he was in town, Lord Melvern's house being painting. I am sure you will like it."

Louisa had no doubt of that, it had been occupied by Lord Danefield; a very sufficient recommendation.

Sir Charles now having fulfilled the trust he had imposed upon himself, and seen Louisa in safe hands, prepared to depart, after receiving the heartiest acknowledgments from her. "I hope, Sir," said she, "that you will sometimes honour me with a visit. Allow me to say, that I am proud of being your cousin; and I am sure no person on earth will be more welcome to me, than yourself."

"I have discharged my duty, Madam," said Sir Charles.

Charles, drily, "as a man and as a gentleman; I should have done as much for any person in distress. I will, however, confess, that you have conquered the prejudices I had conceived against Lady Roseville's daughter; and if I can at any time be of use to you, you may command my services. As an amiable young woman, *you* have every claim to them; as a relation, *none*." And he coloured extremely as he spoke.

Louisa was hurt. "I know not why," said she, "you are pleased to make this unkind distinction."

He made no answer, and, bowing respectfully, retired; but quickly returning, "one thing I had forgotten," said he; "possibly you are without money; suffer me, I entreat you, to be your banker."

"No, Sir," said Louisa, haughtily; "the only plea that could have induced me to accept assistance from you, you have proved to me is slighted by you. Excuse, therefore, my declining it; I already owe you but too many obligations."

"Do not thus denominate the slight service I have rendered you. I am sorry, my frankness has disoblged you; for indeed, Madam, I sincerely wish you health and happiness. Farewell!" and he vanished.

"What a singular compound is this man's mind!"

mind!" thought Louisa. "Does he suppose nobody is worthy of claiming kin to him? Pity that such strange pride and prejudices, should mingle with noble and generous qualities!"

Miss Barton took the opportunity of going home in the empty chaise; Louisa rewarded her amply for her attendance, and found her finances were now reduced almost to nothing.

Mrs. Stanford then conducted her to her lodgings, and supplied her with a change of linen, &c. Louisa was delighted with her apartment. "This chair," thought she, "probably was that Lord Danefield used; in that bed he slept. But, alas! does he still love me? He little thinks what dangers I have escaped from!"

She now rejoined Mrs. Stanford, telling her she was more and more charmed with her apartment; and then, with a timid air, asked when she had seen Lord Danefield. By Mrs. Stanford's answer, she found, he had passed two or three days at her house, much about the time that she had left Shropshire; and then alarmed about Lord Melvern's health, had suddenly gone to Aix-la-Chapelle, where his Lordship was already arrived.

"He was much out of spirits though, before he knew that Lord Melvern was so ill," added Mrs. Stanford; "what ailed him, I don't know; but he did nothing but sigh, and was in a constant anxiety

xiety to get letters, which I believe never came, for he departed in great dejection."

"To get letters! What mystery is this?" thought Louisa. At night, while she was arranging her toilet, she opened a table drawer, and in a corner found some loose papers; she was going to throw them out, but considering they might have belonged to Danefield, she glanced an eye over them: they were only covers of letters, excepting one, which seemed part of a letter addressed to him, and torn off by accident. Louisa could not resist reading it.—"Must be very charming, if she resembles her portrait, and I cannot wonder at your preference. I was prevented seeing her, by some engagements that I could not get off; but, perhaps, I ought not to regret them; for all my friendship for you might have been insufficient, to fence my heart against so many attractions. My stay here will be short; I am going to accompany——"

"Ah! how dearly do I pay for my impertinent curiosity!" exclaimed Louisa. "Now the mystery ceases; Lord Danefield is faithless! Some little remorse, perhaps, occasioned the dejection, Mrs. Stanford mentions; and the letters he was so anxious to receive, were those he expected from this new object of his passion. There can be no mistake

mistake here ; I must be out of the question, never having had my portrait taken."

The papers were thrust into the drawer. The chamber, next morning, after a sleepless night, appeared gloomy ; the chair was thought uneasy, and the bed very uncomfortable.

Mrs. Stanford perceived Louisa's dejection, which she supposed to be the effect of her late unpleasant adventure, and she neglected nothing in her power to amuse her ; but poor Louisa was not to be amused. She heard, however, with sincere satisfaction, that the oculist had assured Mrs. Stanford, nothing material ailed her eye.

Louisa now considered, whether she might venture to send to Bangrove ; all his professions of friendship, had not sufficed to inspire her with perfect confidence ; yet such was her situation, as to be almost under a necessity of applying to him, not only to furnish her with an immediate supply of money, without which she could not undertake her journey, but likewise to prevail on Lady Roseville to let her have her clothes and other effects, she had left in Portman-square : besides, she wished, through him, to discover what was become of her faithful Marianne, the want of whose attendance was very inconvenient to her.

And so cogent did these reasons appear for sending to him, that she would not listen to the suggestions

gestions of distrust, which whispered to her, that if he should betray her to her mother, her situation would become more deplorable than ever.

Bangrove was not long, before he obeyed her summons, and accosted her with a very consequential air. She was somewhat surprized to find him acquainted with all that had happened to her; but he soon accounted for this knowledge, by telling her he had that morning, before he received her note, seen Sir Charles Roseville, who had called upon him, and desired he would wait upon her, as possibly she might have some commands for him.

This was a fresh instance of Sir Charles's good nature, and only made her the more regret, the strange inconsistency of his character.

"I can, Madam," said Bangrove, "give you some account of Lord Pompouston; for before I came here, I thought I would just step into Wimpole-street, and find out what was become of him, which, I own, excited my curiosity."

"Well," said Louisa, "and what did you learn?"

"That he came home much indisposed, late last night; but I know well enough, whence his indisposition proceeded."

"And my—Lady Roseville," said Louisa, correcting

recting herself, her heart rejecting the fond appellation of mother; "what news of her?"

"I am this moment come from her house."

"Good Heaven!" interrupted Louisa, "surely you did not discover to her my retreat."

"Dear Madam! I had no such thought. I only had a mind to see how matters stood; so I sifted the servants a little——"

"Mighty imprudent!" exclaimed Louisa; "but proceed."

"Well, Madam, I gained little intelligence; whether they were ignorant, or whether they had their cue, I know not; but they seemed quite composed; all I could learn was, that their Lady, and you, were gone to Lady Dashaway's. But just as I went from the door, your servant, Marianne, ran after me; told me Lady Roseville had discharged her, and that she was in great trouble to know what was become of you, not believing you at Fairley."

"Poor girl!" cried Louisa, "and where is she?"

"Coming here immediately, Madam; I told her where she might find you. Now, Miss Roseville," continued Bangrove, "I hope you will in future have more faith in me. Did not I tell you, what you might expect from Lady Roseville and her associates? But you seemed to hold my opi-

nion very cheap, and see what has happened? Now what you ought to do, should be to petition Chancery, to authorize your removal from Lady Roseville, and forthwith commence a suit against Lord Pompeuston, for forcibly carrying you off, and——”

“ Hold ; no more of this I beg,” cried Louisa ;
“ I shall do nothing of the kind.”

“ I dare say not ; perhaps you are now thinking of putting yourself again in your mother’s power, in spite of all you have suffered.”

“ No, Mr. Bangrove, I have no such thought ; I never more will live with Lady Roseville ; and hope, in a few days, to be under the protection of a friend at Weymouth.”

“ And Lord Danefield, Madam,” said Bangrove ; “ where is he ?”

“ Dear Sir, what is that to our business ?” and she coloured extremely.

“ Nay, Madam, I meant no harm. But I must tell you, that Sir Charles, in his dry manners, said much in your praise ; ’tis a great pity that you and his son——”

“ Lord bless me !” cried Louisa, quite provoked, “ how you do wander from our subject ! I want to consult you, as to what measures I should take to get my clothes ; I dare not send for

them, because Lady Roseville would then discover my abode."

"If you think fit to employ me," said Bangrove, "I warrant I'll get them for you."

"Remember," cried Louisa, "that I only authorize you respectfully to represent how very inconvenient it is to me, to be without them."

"Well, only write a bit of a note, and give it me."

Louisa then, with much reluctance, desired Bangrove to advance her a small sum of money; to which he consented, after taking her note for it; and then, after many bows, he retired.

Louisa longed most impatiently for Mrs. Raby's answer; she dreaded, lest some accident should betray her to her mother, or Lord Pompouston; and though Mrs. Stanford was very amiable, her conversation distressed her, because it generally turned on Lord Danefield's merits, which her heart was still ready to acknowledge, but to which her reason could not cordially assent.

As soon as she could expect it, Mrs. Raby's answer came; it was such as could not fail of charming Louisa; kind, sensible, and delicate.

And the day following, with many expressions of gratitude and affection, she embraced Mrs. Stanford, and set out on her journey, accompanied by

her faithful Marianne, to whom she had given a very hearty welcome.

From her she learned, that after she had seen her depart from Portman-square, as she imagined with Lady Roseville, she enquired of Mrs. Lacely, why the chaise did not appear that was to convey them, and was told that it was not quite ready. She returned, therefore, to her young lady's apartment, where, while she was settling some little matters, she was amazed at Lady Roseville's abrupt appearance, who told her that Miss Roseville had no further occasion for her services, and would pay her her wages on her return from the country, whither she was gone to be married. Marianne thought this very odd, and boldly said, she never could believe her young lady would part with her thus; and that if she was gone to be married, she doubted much, that there had been some unfair play. This so highly offended Lady Roseville, that she commanded her to leave the house as soon as it was light, which she had done, and got a lodging close by.

She added, that till she had spoken with Mr. Bangrove in the street, she had suffered the most cruel uneasiness; had taken the liberty to write to Dr. Sandolph, to tell him what had happened, and had made many unsuccessful enquiries to learn what was become of her dear young lady.

Louisa, highly sensible of this good creature's affection, assured her, in return, of her regard, and of her sincere wish never again to be separated from her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOUISA was met at Dorchester by Mrs. Raby, with the most cordial affection; and scarcely could the latter refrain from rejoicing at an event, that procured her the society of her charming friend.

The *hotel* was the place where she had fixed her abode, which she found more convenient than a private lodging; for being accustomed to reside altogether with her brother, she had few servants of her own.

The chamber she had secured for Louisa, fronted the sea; the sound of the beating waves according with the pensive cast of Louisa's mind, she foresaw that she should be disposed to pass many hours in a place where she could, without restraint, indulge her sad reflections.

Mrs. Raby was extremely desirous of hearing a full detail of the events that had befallen her, which Louisa had explained but imperfectly in her letter; and however averse she was to criminate her mother, it was impossible she could avoid it, in the present instance, without a total violation of truth; but it was with deep regret, that she related this black transaction even to her most intimate friend.

"You see, my dear Emily," added she, "that

it is impossible for me to think of residing henceforth with my mother ; I must therefore request Doctor Sandolph, when he returns from Wales, to find out some proper asylum for me."

" Would to God ! I could offer you one, that you could approve," cried Mrs. Raby ; " but my brother is of late much altered ; our house is become a scene of noise and tumult, shunned by all people of taste and elegance ; and I often find myself amidst company which I am ashamed of. I should be far happier in a house of my own ; yet my brother still loves me and my children, and would, I am sure, be extremely averse to our separation ; therefore I own I do not feel sufficient resolution to quit him ; our presence tends to cherish some soft and gentle sentiments in him, which, but for this, his rough companions would completely destroy."

" I would not, upon any account, have you quit Mr. Melcomb," returned Louisa, " who is a very unexceptionable protector, notwithstanding some trifling failings, which chiefly hurt himself ; and perhaps we are both full young to be left entirely to our own discretion. Perfectly satisfied as I am, my dear Emily, with your friendship, I ask no proof of it, but your protection for the present."

Mrs. Raby tenderly embraced her, and assured
he

her nothing could delight her more than her company. The friends then settled their plan of life, and agreed not to appear in public, that Louisa might not be exposed to any fresh persecutions. They bathed at a very early hour in the morning, drove out after breakfast to some distance from the town, repeated their airings in the evening, and read and worked the rest of their time.

Louisa had passed a few tranquil days at Weymouth. One night after she had parted with Mrs. Raby, and was retired in her chamber, finding herself little disposed to sleep she stood leaning with her elbows on the window, her eyes fixed on the sea. There was no moon, but the sky was beautifully clear and brilliant with stars, and a gleam of light seemed to play on the rippling water. This agreeable sight, at first engaged Louisa's attention; but shortly she fell into her usual train of thought, in which she had continued so long, that every thing was become quiet around her, when she was suddenly roused by her door being flung open with great noise, and two persons bounced in, who were as hastily retreating with an apology for their mistake, when an involuntary scream which escaped from Louisa, instantly brought them back again.

"My God! what luck!" exclaimed a voice, which she but too well knew to be Lord Pom-

poultton's. "Go," cried he to his valet de chambre, who had preceded him with lights. Louisa herself flew towards the door to escape, but the man was gone, the door locked, and the key deposited in Lord Pompoultton's pocket, with a celerity that baffled her attempts.

"Now," cried he, his eyes flashing fire, "now, Madam, you and I shall settle our accounts together. You must make me amends for the indignities I suffered by your means, when you left me senseless on the ground; exposed to the derision of a pack of fellows, who delighted in seeing a man of my quality insulted. But it shall be my turn now to triumph."

Louisa, exceedingly terrified, yet sufficiently mistress of herself to forbear calling for assistance, (because she dreaded beyond measure an *éclat* in a public *hotel*) approached him with folded hands.

"Be not ungenerous, Lord Pompoultton; depart instantly, without obliging me to take unpleasant measures for your dismissal."

"O! I shall not stir, 'till I have taken my revenge on you, who shewed no feeling for me; therefore 'tis fit I should be as callous towards you."

"Indeed, Lord Pompoultton, you must go, and that directly. As to the sufferings you lay to my charge, you know I had no hand in them; they were the consequence of your own violence, and I
cannot

cannot think you are capable of bearing malice towards a woman. But go, I beseech you ; do not force me to alarm the house by my cries."

" Before that can be done," cried he, " I'll profit at least by the present moment," attempting to catch her in his arms, but she eluded his grasp.

" If you will but leave me now," cried Louisa, " I give you my word and honour I will see you to-morrow morning at any hour you please ; but if you come one step nearer, I will call to the servants in the next room."

Lord Pompoultou hesitated ; but, considering how impossible it would be for him to continue in her chamber against her will, in a house full of people, consented to enter into a compromise.

First he stipulated, that she should grant him a full pardon for all past offences ; and next, that she should promise, without any mental reservation or equivocation, to meet him in the morning upon the sands at seven o'clock. He insisted upon her coming alone ; but that she protested against.

" Why," said he laughing, " I cannot run away with you amidst the bathers."

At last he consented her maid should accompany her ; and as a proof of her sincerity towards him, he was very urgent to seal the agreement with a kiss ; but Louisa being inexorable, he was obliged to content himself with just touching her

hand, which she reluctantly held out, and then he departed, amazed at the ascendancy which beauty and virtue united, obtained over his turbulent passions.

The moment he was gone, Louisa hastened to fasten the door, which Mrs. Raby had persuaded her not to lock for fear of fire. Louisa congratulated herself on having, by her own prudence, got rid of Lord Pompoufton, without making a disturbance in the house at that time of night, which, besides overwhelming her with confusion, must have occasioned a great many idle stories, very prejudicial to her reputation.

She learned from Lord Pompoufton, that he had arrived late that night at Weymouth, where he came to dissipate his *ennui*, without the least idea of finding there the object he had ineffectually sought in London; that he had soon after his arrival, gone out to supper; and on his return, his servant, who was half asleep, and perhaps not quite sober, had ushered him by mistake into Louisa's chamber, which was above that prepared for his Lord.

Poor Louisa passed a restless night; she could not help starting every moment, and fancying as she dozed, that Lord Pompoufton was returned.

Before six o'clock she arose, and went to Mrs. Raby, to whom she related Lord Pompoufton's disagreeable

disagreeable intrusion, and all that had passed between them.

"But surely," cried Mrs. Raby, "you don't mean to meet him?"

"Indeed but I do."

"Well, I should not think myself bound," said Mrs. Raby, "to keep a promise thus extorted from me."

"I differ with you," replied Louisa; "Lord Pompoufton went away perfectly relying on it; therefore I keep it, because my honour is engaged in the performance, and not to gratify him; for you may imagine this interview must be very disagreeable to me."

At the appointed time, Louisa, after desiring Mrs. Raby would keep an eye upon her from the window, and join her after she had made a turn, went out. At a distance, she discerned the figure of a man upon the sands, but it seemed unlike Lord Pompoufton. It was a very different person; and she soon distinguished Lord Danefield's air. He too seemed to know her, by the hasty steps he made to reach her. He seemed exceedingly agitated, yet so evidently overjoyed to see her, as made her almost repent of her jealousy, 'till recollecting how strong the proof appeared of his infidelity, corroborated by his silence, she armed herself with

coldness to receive him, not a little dreading his meeting with Lord Pompoufton.

“ Is it thus, Mifs Roseville,” cried Lord Danefield, mortified to the quick, “ that I am received. I was miftaken then, when I believed your f Silence involuntary ; and came, perfuaded that you would explain it to my fatisfaction. I have much to fay to you.”

“ I can hear nothing at prefent, My Lord :” cried Louifa, in great trepidation, “ nor perhaps ever.”

“ Good God! why this cruel *ever* ;—what can have prejudiced you againft me ?”

At this moment Lord Pompoufton overtook them. “ I am extremely obliged to you,” cried he in a loud voice, “ for being fo punctual to your appointment, and am afhamed, Mifs Roseville, that I have made you wait ; but Lord Danefield’s prefence was not included in our agreement.”

“ The caufe, Madam,” whifpered Lord Danefield, “ of your cool reception, is now explained ; far be it from me, to interrupt an affignation of your appointing.”

And, without looking at Lord Pompoufton, he bowed to her, and hurried off.

All Louifa’s wonted prefence of mind now forfook her ; fhe actually ran fome paces, crying, “ Stay, Lord Danefield ; ftay, I conjure you.”

“ My

" My presence, Madam," said he without slackening his pace, " is quite unnecessary." And in a moment, he was out of sight.

" Horribly unlucky to be sure you are!" cried Lord Pompoufton with a malicious sneer; " but since he is so inflexible, you may as well remember, that your appointment was with *me*, and not with Danefield."

Louisa made no answer; her heart swelled with contending passions, and she almost wished she was buried in the sand.

" Since you will not honour me with a word," said Lord Pompoufton, " I have so little cause to be satisfied, that I most heartily repent having behaved so generously to you last night."

" Generously!" echoed Louisa.

" Yes, generously; few young men but would have made a better use of their good fortune. However, I wish to know your final determination in regard to me. If favourable, I shall adore you;—if otherwise, I believe I must go and cut Sir Charles Roseville's throat."

" Savage wretch! what has that good man done to excite your malevolence?"

" Taken from me my soul's treasure; the greatest injury he could do me; and occasioned me besides, personal insult."

" You desire me to be explicit," said Louisa;
" understand

"understand then, nothing in this world shall induce me to be yours; therefore cease a hopeless pursuit. But if you will drop all thoughts of vengeance against my friend, and relation, I will endeavour to think of you, as a man not impenetrable to noble sentiments, and I shall cease to hate you."

"Cease to hate me! and that's all! But will you promise to love me?"

"No; that is utterly impossible."

"Well, I'll spare Sir Charles, because he has the honour to bear your name; but I am not often disposed to put up with affronts."

Mrs. Raby's arrival, now put an end to this discourse, and Lord Pomfoultou tried to win her over to his interest, but with so little success that she hurried back her friend to the *hotel*; both she and Louisa parting from his Lordship with the most distant civility.

Scarcely had they reached their apartment, before Louisa throwing her arms round Mrs. Raby's neck, burst into tears. "I am undone for ever!" cried she; "the only man in the world whose esteem I valued, thinks ill of me!"

"Lord Danefield do you mean? I thought I saw him."

"You did indeed! He came purposely to see me; to tell me perhaps, he was free from his engagement

gagement with Lady Almeria ; and the first thing he hears, is, that abominable Lord Pompoufton thanking me for my punctuality in meeting him ! upon which away he hurried."

Mrs. Raby endeavoured to console her ; represented that Lord Danefield would soon be undeceived ; and that it was impossible he could retain an injurious opinion of her. She added, " you seem to have forgotten your own jealousy ; yet, no longer ago than yesterday, I thought you had determined never again to speak to this faithless man."

" 'Tis true ; the circumstance of the letter alarmed me, nor can I yet tell what to think ; but so contradictory are my sentiments, that however offended I am with him, I could not see him without unspeakable pleasure, and I cannot bear he should think me a jilt. He seemed too, unfeignedly happy to see me when we met on the sands ; but what is very odd, he hinted his surprize at my silence, as if he had deserved to hear from me. I would fain however persuade myself he has not been unfaithful ; but how account for the affair of the portrait ?"

This was impossible to Mrs. Raby, who determined to send, unknown to Louisa, to find out Lord Danefield, and desire him to call upon her ;
when

when she hoped very soon to clear up matters between them.

But the servant returned with the intelligence, that he had only been one night in the town, had been gone above an hour, and that when he went away, he seemed uncertain what road he should take.

Mrs. Raby consoled herself for the failure of her friendly scheme, by thinking that Lord Danefield's speedy-departure, would at least prevent any *fracas* happening between him and Lord Pompoultou. This too mitigated Louisa's vexation; and she resolved to confine herself a close prisoner, as long as Lord Pompoultou remained at Weymouth, and to occupy the same apartment as Mrs. Raby.

The latter was of opinion, that the best thing she could do, would be to leave Weymouth in the night, and to take such measures, as would render it impossible for Lord Pompoultou to trace her. But Louisa thought herself safer in the *hotel*, and disliked the idea of running with her friend mysteriously about the country, like distressed damsels in a romance. Her clothes too, were not yet come, and this subjected her to great inconvenience.

CHAPTER XXV.

LORD Pompoultou having in vain, for two days, tried to force Louisa out of her intrenchment, after persecuting Mrs. Raby with letters and messages, to beg her intercession with Miss Roseville, at last gave up the point, and suddenly left Weymouth.

The post now brought her the following letter:— what her sensations were, on perusing it, cannot easily be described.

TO MISS ROSEVILLE..

“ MADAM,

“ Suddenly to discover imperfections in any object that one has supposed faultless, must, by proving the judgment erroneous, give sensible mortification; but if that object has long engrossed every tender sentiment, of which the heart of man is susceptible, how affecting must the discovery be! Disappointed in my visionary hopes of happiness, I own myself still solicitous, that yours should be established on a more solid basis, which, perhaps, may somewhat excuse my presumption in observing to you, that the inconsistency of your
conduct,

conduct, cannot fail of being prejudicial to yourself.

“ I shall pass over in silence your neglect of my letters, because, till I met you at Weymouth, some circumstances induced me to suspect unfair means had been taken by Lady Roseville to suppress them, so that possibly they never reached you.

“ But to put myself out of the question, suffer me to advert, to what relates more materially to you.

“ After your forced elopement with Lord Pom-poufton (which I never heard of till this day, and which my sister assures me, gave you infinite uneasiness) one should naturally suppose he would be the last man in the world, you would deign to honour with an appointment. This singular circumstance, so opposite to the idea I entertained of your delicacy, I was so unfortunate to witness. How much it shocked—but pardon my recurring again to self; I am too sensible that cannot interest you—I meant—but my ideas are so disordered, I scarcely know what I mean; however, I think I meant to observe, that as after what passed in Shropshire, you may not consider yourself as perfectly free; I beg it may be understood, that I should be very sorry to obstruct your wishes, which I must conclude, are in favour of Lord Pom-poufton. May your union with him render
you

you happy! and then I will endeavour not to repine, that when all obstacles were removed, when Lord Melvern had sacrificed his own wishes to promote mine, all my fond hopes were in one instant blasted!

" Your reception, did indeed, somewhat prepare me for this cruel disappointment; but why you wished to detain me, to witness your preference of another, of a man, whom you once professed to dislike, is wholly inexplicable.

" I have the honour to be, Madam,

" Your most unhappy,

" Though still devoted,

" And obedient servant,

Duke-street, (Monday)

" DANEFIELD."

Mrs. Raby, who found Louisa bathed in tears, took the letter which she held out to her, and having read it, " Well," cried she, " all this may easily be set to rights; I shall answer this letter, with your permission; and I am very certain Lord Danefield is as innocent of infidelity, as you are. Lady Roseville, full of her odious project, probably intercepted your letters—come, come; dry your tears—Lord Danefield will very shortly be at your feet, imploring your pardon."

While Mrs. Raby was thus consoling her friend, they were somewhat alarmed by hearing

an

an express was arrived from Mr. Bangrove, who desired to be immediately admitted to speak with Miss Roseville.

As Louisa imagined he had nothing to say to her, except concerning the detention of her clothes, she was vexed to have made Bangrove, who she knew to be very officious, fancy himself a man of importance to her, "to send an express about a mere nothing, as if a letter by the post would not have done as well!" thus thought she.

But Mrs. Raby, who was present, was astonished at her change of countenance, while she was reading the letter, "You are sure, Sir," said she, "turning to the bearer, "that all this is true?"

"I suppose so;—why should you doubt it, Madam?"

"I will give you an answer in a few moments;" said she, and she withdrew with Mrs. Raby.

"After all the snares that have been laid for me, 'tis no wonder," said she, "that I am suspicious of every thing. Read this letter, my dear Emily, and advise me how to act."

TO MISS ROSEVILLE.

" MADAM, *Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 25.*

" The very moment this reaches you, I would advise you (albeit you are shy of receiving advice from me) to put yourself immediately into a chaise, or coach, or whatever vehicle you please, and forthwith come to London. No time is to be lost, if you wish to find Lady Roseville alive. As soon as you arrive, I crave the favour of you to send to me; and at any hour, day or night, I will come to you.

" Her Ladyship, in her good intervals, is distracted to see you; how she came into her present condition, or where she is, 'tis needless to mention at present.

" The bearer has my orders to vouch for the truth of this letter, at least that he saw me sign, seal, and deliver it; further, I did not choose to entrust him with.—In expectation of seeing you immediately, I remain,

" MADAM,

" Your most obedient humble servant,

" JOHN BANGROVE."

" Does this appear to be his hand writing?" asked Mrs. Raby.

" It does; but did you ever read any thing so alarming

alarming and incoherent? I dread, lest Lord Pompoufton should be at the bottom of this."

"Let me go and lift the man."

Accordingly she did; but he either was, or pretended to be, ignorant of every thing that concerned Lady Roseville.

Louisa terrified, yet full of doubt and perplexity, knew not what to resolve; when Mr. Melcomb unexpectedly arrived, to see his sister, who, upon hearing what had happened, offered instantly to attend Louisa to London. Such an escort, relieved her from all her apprehensions in regard to Lord Pompoufton; and Mrs. Raby saying she would be of the party, determined her to set out immediately, and she dispatched the express, with this answer to Bangrove.

Mrs. Raby, unwilling to hurry her children, left them to follow leisurely with their servant; and, in a very short time, she, and Louisa, were ready for their journey.

They went on without stopping, only to change horses, to London; poor Louisa, all the while, figuring to herself a variety of disasters, without being able to conjecture which of them had befallen her mother; and in her present anxiety, she ceased to remember every cause of displeasure she had given her.

It was about nine at night when they got to Hill-

Hill-street, where Mr. Melcomb proposed Louisa should stay, while he went in search of Bangrove, with whom he secretly wished to confer, on the mysterious appearance of things, before he saw her. In the mean while she and her friend took a little refreshment; and two hours passed, which seemed two ages to Louisa, before he returned, when he came, accompanied by Bangrove.

Louisa saw by the countenance of the latter, that there was real cause of alarm, and in a faint voice, enquired after her mother.

"She is alive, and that's all;" said he; "will you come and see her?"

Louisa instantly arose, and Mrs. Raby was preparing to follow her, but Bangrove interposed.

"Your presence, Madam, might distress Lady Roseville—Mr. Melcomb may be of use; therefore I shall crave the favour of his attendance on Miss Roseville."

Mrs. Raby, with reluctance, consented to stay behind; and as she had been ill all day, Louisa was the more willing to go without her. A hackney coach was in waiting, into which she threw herself, exceedingly oppressed with grief and dismay.

"Have you told the man to go to Portman-square?" said she, to Bangrove.

"No, Madam, I thought I had hinted to you,
that

that Lady Roseville was not there ; but I have directed him whither to go."

Louisa, unable to account for this change of habitation, gazed wildly at him, " Not in Portman-square !" cried she, " and yet so dangerously ill ! where then is my mother ? "

" Why, Madam," said Bangrove, hesitatingly, " why—she is at a friend's house."

" Lord bless me ! " cried Louisa, where can the man be carrying us ; surely, she must be in a strange part of the town ? "

" Don't be alarmed ; he is going very right."

Louisa said nothing, but looked at Melcomb, whose presence somewhat re-assured her. Presently after, she asked how long her mother had been ill, what her illness was, and who attended her.

To all which she received strange unintelligible answers ; and all she could gather was, that her illness had been sudden, and that she did not want for advice.

Just before the carriage stopped, Bangrove said, " you must not be surprized, Miss Roseville, if you find your mother but indifferently lodged ; but it is the best apartments the man could give her."

" The man could give her ! " repeated Louisa ; " what man do you mean ? "

" Why, Madam, truth will out ; the sheriff's officer, is the man I speak of."

" Gracious

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Louisa, "is my mother then in a spunging house?"

"'Tis too true."

"And how could you be so cruel to suffer her——"

"How could I tell you, would bail her? you have already encumbered yourself, by taking her debts upon you; besides too, you are under age."

"It shall be my affair," cried Melcomb, "to bail Lady Roseville; so my dear Madam, have no uneasiness upon that head—I wished Mr. Bangrove not to have shocked you with this intelligence."

"O, my poor mother!" sobbed Louisa, "my poor mother!"

"There's nothing so very terrible in this, as you imagine;" said Bangrove, "a worse discovery is yet to be made."

"Oh God! support me!" cried Louisa, "what further horrors have you to disclose?"

The coach stopping, prevented Bangrove's answer; but as he handed her into the house, the appearance of which alone, was sufficient to shock her, he whispered, "call all your fortitude to your aid; you must expect to find your mother much altered."

A woman now appeared, and offering to light Louisa up stairs, Bangrove desired she would wait

a moment, that he might prepare Lady Roseville to see her.

During his absence, Melcomb, in the kindest manner, attempted to sooth and support her spirits ; she felt his attentions, and wondered at them ; but Melcomb was by nature gentle, though he had lately thought it manly, to appear the contrary.

Bangrove's appearance at the door, was a summons for Louisa to follow ; the woman preceded them with a candle, up a little dirty staircase ; and Louisa's heart palpitated so violently, and her knees knocked together, as she ascended ; so much, that she was ready to sink.

But all that she had imagined of most horrible, fell short of the scene, which the opening door presented—Lady Roseville, or a figure that was shewn to her as such (for she could not believe it to be her mother at first) was seated in a dirty green stuff bed, supported by pillows ; by her maid Lacey on one side, and a great fat red-faced nurse on the other :—her complexion of a dead white, sprinkled with a sort of dew, and tinged with purple spots ; her face swelled, and all her features distended ; a white froth bubbling out of her parched and livid mouth ; and her large eyes, red and glassy, were rolling from side to side, without apparently distinguishing any thing ; she seemed to
breathe

breathe with great difficulty, and inarticulately she cried out for air.

Such, was now the figure, of the once gay, and beautiful Lady Roseville!

The windows were open, and a rushing wind blew about the curtains, and threatened extinction to one miserable tallow candle, guttering in a corner.

"Approach," cried she, endeavouring to raise her voice, "and save your mother from destruction."

This exertion was too much for her; she uttered a deep groan, and sunk, half fainting, on her pillow. Louisa had thrown herself on her knees by the side of the bed, and had seized her clammy hand; but overcome by this spectacle, she became nearly as senseless as her mother. Drops were given to both, and both revived. Louisa first recovered the power of speech,—“would to God, my dear mother,” said she, “it was in my power to relieve you; but to the Almighty alone you must look for help!”

“What, then you think me dying? Oh! cursed be the hour when I took that fatal draught!”

Bangrove shrugged his shoulders.

“What draught? has there been some mistake in my mother’s medicines?” asked Louisa, with increased terror.

“O no, no mistake; it was all my own doing,

and I shall never get the better of it. My entrails are at this moment on fire."

"Surely she is light headed," whispered Louisa, starting up, and looking wildly herself, "send instantly; run! fly! get the best advice. Why was she let to remain in this horrid place?"

"She could not be removed without the greatest danger," said Bangrove, in a low voice, "had she not been detained by the writ; and an eminent physician left her, just before you came."

"Tell me quickly, what does he think of her?"

"That her recovery is scarcely to be expected; and that he cannot pronounce whether she can bear the fatigue of a removal, till to-morrow; he will be here by eight in the morning. In the mean while, he has ordered her a composing draught; but she protested, she would not take it till, she had seen you."

Louisa instantly had it poured out, and tenderly taking her mother's hand, pressed her to take it.

"I will;" said she, "if you will promise not to leave me; your presence will protect me against horrors."

"Tranquillize your mind, my dear mother; be assured," said Louisa, "I will not leave you."

Lady Roseville now being settled for the night, and Louisa placed in a greasy arm chair by her
bed

bed side, Bangrove took his leave, charged with a message from her to Melcomb, to thank him for his trouble, and earnestly to entreat that he would go home, and relieve his sister from her anxiety. But Melcomb could not endure the idea of deserting his sweet young friend, in such a place, and such a situation—Lady Roseville might expire in the night; and then, thought he, “what would become of her daughter, amid strangers!” instead therefore of going home, he discharged the coach, and wrote a few lines to Mrs. Raby, to explain what had happened; ensuring himself a hearty welcome at the officer’s house, by ordering a handsome supper, which he scarcely touched; though Bangrove, whom he asked to partake of it, did not find his appetite in the least affected by any melancholy impression, which it might be supposed, his mind had received: when he retired, he promised to meet the physician the next morning.

And Melcomb throwing himself into a chair, prepared to pass the night in the parlour of the spunging house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IT may easily be imagined, what a dreadful night poor Louisa passed; fatigued in mind and body; afraid of indulging any propensity to sleep, lest her mother should suffer by her want of vigilance; roused every ten minutes, by Lady Roseville's hollow groans; sometimes terrified by the wild manner in which she tore open the curtain, exclaiming, "She is gone; I know she is gone!" Then, she would with violence grasp her hand, and in a supplicating tone, entreat her to save and forgive her.

Once, she gave a horrid shriek, and cried out, "Sir Edward is come; see how frightfully he threatens me! O God! it is all over! I am undone for ever!"

Then turning to Louisa, she said, "Don't leave me a single moment! your innocence is a shield, that perhaps, may even cover me." And in a more collected manner, she added, "Don't cry; you have nothing to lament. Oh! that I could reflect on one good action, to cheer my mind! but—oh!"

And after a deep groan, she became more composed; and towards morning, dozed a little.

Ban-

Bangrove, and the physician, (a humane and sensible man) were punctual to their appointment ; the latter found Lady Roseville a little better, and thought, if a lodging could be procured very near, she might, with precaution, be transported thither.

Bangrove therefore, by Louisa's desire, went immediately to find some clean quiet place fit to receive her. In the mean while, Mr. Melcomb gave his bail to the sheriff's officer, and was not a little amazed to hear Lady Roseville had been arrested at the suit of Sir Ralph Random ! This he communicated to Louisa, who was exceedingly surprized, when she found him in the parlour, and learned, that he had passed the night there. Such kind attention, could not fail of pleasing and obliging her ; however, she pressed him to go home, to which he consented, promising to send his sister to her, if she was tolerably well.

Bangrove soon returned, having found a lodging, such as was wished, at a little distance from the sheriff officer's house : Louisa herself stepped to see it, and to order the necessary preparations to be made for her mother's reception ; and about an hour afterward, Lady Roseville was, with infinite difficulty, got down stairs, and carried on a matress to a coach, screaming all the time, and adding, by her own impatience, to her sufferings. No sooner had they placed her in the carriage, than

she fell into convulsions, from which, by the Doctor's assistance, she recovered; and then, attended by Mrs. Lacely and the nurse, proceeded in the coach, which went at a snail's pace to her new habitation, where they had less trouble in getting her settled, as her apartment was on the ground floor.

The Doctor waited till she was in bed; strongly recommending, that she might be kept very quiet; and indeed, she was so exhausted with her late fatigue, that she lay motionless, and only by her hard breathing, gave signs of life. As he was departing, Louisa followed him into a parlour, and desired to know his real opinion of her mother's case.

"Why, Madam," said he, "I am sorry I can give you but very little hopes indeed; for though we have contrived to blunt some of the corrosive particles of the poison, we could not sheath them so entirely, as totally to destroy their malignity. Lady Roseville's constitution being naturally strong, she may hold out a week, or possibly ten days; but I scarcely think she will last so long, especially as the turbulent state in which I have observed her mind to be (excuse, Madam, my freedom of speech) frequently counteracts the composing medicines I give her."

Louisa, inexpressibly shocked to find that the
hints

hints her mother had thrown out, of having poisoned herself, were founded in truth, could make no reply : and the Doctor retired, assuring her, that no care on his part should be wanting, at least to mitigate Lady Roseville's sufferings.

Louisa then wished to hear from Bangrove, what he knew of this horrid story ; but he pressed her earnestly to defer hearing it till the evening, and to take the opportunity of Lady Roseville's present composed state, to seek repose herself, which her looks too plainly indicated, how much she needed. Indeed, when it is considered that she had travelled day and night from Weymouth, and ever since had suffered all that terror, grief, and anxiety, could inflict ; it must appear, that nothing but the fortitude of her own own mind, could have supported her so long. She consented therefore to lie down, and after a short sleep, was again in readiness to attend her mother, who, continuing in a torpid state, Louisa was at liberty to receive her friend Mrs. Raby, whose gentle soothing, calmed her spirits.

Bangrove returned early in the evening ; having adjusted his ruffles, and stroaked his chin, began, with a very consequential air, the desired relation.

" I fear, ladies," said he, " that my account will be but very imperfect ; for I have never been

able to get from Lady Roseville, more than broken hints, as she has been generally in too much pain, to give a circumstantial detail of what has lately passed.

But former transactions, which you cannot be acquainted with, no person is enabled to relate so well as myself; for many years I have done business for all your family, received their rents, and I may say, possessed their entire confidence.

I shall take things back as long ago as when your father, who was but eighteen, first saw your mother at an assembly at Cambridge; whither he had gone to see his cousin Temple, (the present Sir Charles Roseville) with whom he was extremely intimate. The moment he saw her, he fell passionately in love with her; to which I have heard Sir Charles say, she contributed, by every allurement in her power. I need not tell you her success; she persuaded your father to disregard the prudent advice of his cousin, who saw through her arts; and a journey to Scotland was the consequence.

You have doubtless heard, how extremely offended his parents were with this match, which the disparity of years between the new married couple, gave them just cause to suspect their son had been drawn into; and this suspicion being corroborated, by the unfavourable account they
heard

heard of your mother's former conduct, added to her want of birth and fortune, made them for some time, refuse him their forgiveness: but 'tis difficult to continue inexorable to an only son, especially if that son be heir to a title, and large possessions——."

" These," interrupted Louisa, " have nothing to do with parental affection."

" No, Madam, not positively; but you will allow, pride has a vote on these occasions; and it was given in favour of a reconciliation: but upon a condition, deemed very harsh by Mr. Temple; for his father insisted upon his executing his former project of travelling, at least a twelvemonth; promising, during his absence, to countenance his wife, and to give her an allowance, suitable to her situation as such. Lady Temple would fain have had her daughter-in-law reside with her; but this she declined, preferring to live at a small house, near York, with her friend, Miss Watkyns, now Mrs. Dinley.

Soon after Mr. Temple went abroad, Mrs. Temple announced her pregnancy to the family. This news gave them great joy. Lady Temple resolved she would be with your mother during her lying-in; but two months before that event was expected, you came into the world. Your grandmother, who was always, as you know, very

sickly, happened at that time not to be well enough to undertake a long journey, so that she did not visit your mother, till she had been brought to bed two months.

Mr. Temple, no sooner heard of your birth, than he hastened to England, and passed some time, I believe, in harmony with your mother, on whom he fondly doated: she was, however, on very cool terms with his parents, and his cousin Charles; the latter she never forgave, for having attempted to dissuade Mr. Temple from marrying her: and Charles, formerly so fond of his cousin, was become gloomy, and averse to living with him, on any footing of intimacy, merely on account of his dislike to his wife.

About three years after your father's marriage, the family received a considerable accession of fortune, by the death of your uncle Roseville, whose name they took. And now a great change was perceived in your father's disposition; from being remarkably lively and good humoured, he grew splenetic, and dissatisfied with every thing; which the world did not scruple to say was occasioned by your mother's ill conduct. His father's sudden death, which happened soon after his acquisition of the Roseville estate, affected him very deeply; perhaps the more, from having so little consolation at home; and his domestic unhappiness

ness daily encreasing, he determined once more to go abroad, whither Doctor Sandolph accompanied him. Before he went, he called upon me to desire I would make his will; I asked him, if it should be made conformably to the settlement that had been made on Lady Roseville and his child, immediately after his father's death.

And he answered, "I shall make no change in what I settled upon Lady Roseville; unhappy as she has made me, I still remember I once loved her; but I shall make no addition to her jointure; a decent provision will suffice. As for Louisa," and he sighed deeply, "I am fond of the little thing; and instead of ten thousand pounds, I shall bequeath her my estate in Kent. The Roseville estate, you know, is entailed in the male line;—Charles must have that; and my personal fortune will do little more than discharge my debts, (most of them contracted by my wife) and pay a few legacies."

After this, I saw poor Sir Edward no more; a decline, brought on by vexation, terminated in Flanders, his short and unhappy life.

Sir Charles Roseville immediately took possession of all his property, except Cherry-dale (the estate in Kent). He had ever retained a tender regard for his cousin, though he had seen little of him after his marriage; nor was he on good terms
with

with the Dowager Lady Roseville ; an unfortunate misunderstanding subsisted between them, not likely to be made up, as she had, ever since her husband's death, lived abroad ; but Sir Charles always mentions her with respect.

I was surprized to find how much he was concerned at Sir Edward's death—I should have thought, since he was to be so considerable a gainer by it, he might easily have consoled himself."

" People's feelings," said Louisa, " are more or less delicate, according to their character."

" Sir Charles," continued Bangrove, " would never take the least notice of your mother ; he could not even bear to hear her spoken of ; and I will not conceal from you, Madam, (excuse my freedom) that he doubted much your right to the name of Roseville."

Louisa blushed ; Mrs. Raby looked displeased ; and both recalled to mind Sir Charles Roseville's odd behaviour, which tended to confirm what Bangrove had hinted, who proceeded as follows :

" According to Sir Edward's last injunction, to his friend Doctor Sandolph, you were placed under your grandmother's protection ; and the present Lady Roseville, being free from all cares, and little troubled at her husband's death, removed to York, where she passed some years in a course of uninterrupted gaiety.

" She

She had no acquaintance in London, otherwise a provincial town would not have been the place of her residence ; by degrees she moved in a larger sphere ; and about six years since, having formed an acquaintance with Lady Bridget Wilford, she insinuated herself so much into her ladyship's favour, that she pressed her to go to London, where she promised to introduce her to her numerous acquaintance.

The proposal was too agreeable to be rejected ; and your mother took the house you remember, in Welbeck-street. I now had the honour of seeing her frequently ; from that period she consulted me in all her affairs ; and I may say, my influence over her was unbounded, 'till she attracted the notice of Sir Ralph Random. He followed her so assiduously, that the world thought he meant to marry her ; but that was not his view. He soon discovered, that it would be no very difficult matter to establish a connection upon a much easier footing ; and this was infinitely more agreeable to Lady Roseville.

Her marriage with your father, had already given her rank, and a competency ; but she had found the marriage chains too heavy, to wish to wear them a second time : besides too, she hoped to gain sufficient influence over the Baronet, to procure herself every *douceur* she desired, without
parting

parting with her liberty. But in this she was greatly mistaken; Sir Ralph is by nature tyrannical, and penurious; and though he has at times shewn a contrary disposition in his conduct towards her, it has never been without doing violence to himself, and merely from an apprehension of her breaking entirely with him.

Habit rendered her necessary to his happiness;—and the impossibility of existing without an attachment, added to his being sometimes convenient to her in pecuniary affairs, rendered him as essential to her's.

Such was the situation of things, when you came from abroad. I pass over (for you are already acquainted with those) all the *manœuvres*, that were made to obtain the care of your person, and proceed to tell you, (what I long since suspected) that in a secret treaty between Lady Roseville, and Lord Pompoufton, concluded very soon after your arrival, it was stipulated, that on the day of your marriage with him, he should take up a bond which she had given Sir Ralph for one thousand pounds; and his Lordship, moreover promised, that he would make her quite easy in her affairs.

Sir Ralph, who was informed of this agreement, though he mortally hates Lord Pompoufton, became interested in his success; because he despaired

paired of recovering his money by any other means :
hence arose all the persecutions you endured.

Your mother herself was deceived, in regard to Lord Pompoufton's wealth ; his rental indeed, is very large but he has deeply involved his estate, and has long been in the Jews' hands. Lady Bridget Wilford, who has a blind partiality for him, would naturally have wished him to marry his cousin, had she not been poor : your fortune, Miss Roseville, is far inferior to what she could have desired, but as you have ready money, and as her nephew was really enamoured with you, she joined in the confederacy.

Sir Ralph seeing your repugnance to this desired match, apprehended it would not take place ; and insensibly grew out of humour. He saw too, that Lady Roseville daily launched forth into fresh extravagances, and totally disregarded his representations. Several times he was on the point of breaking with her entirely, but still she found means to pacify him, and after some violent scenes, things went on in their old course.

During Lady Roseville's abode at Stretly, she made Sir Ralph understand the necessity of an apparent rupture, the better to accomplish their end ; for having met Lord Pompoufton at L. Castle, she had renewed her treaty with him, which several circumstances before she left town, had made them
despair

despair of bringing to a conclusion ; but now she had consented to a measure which his Lordship had proposed, and to ensure it success, she thought it of the utmost importance to conciliate your affection, and not to give you umbrage by receiving Sir Ralph's visits.

Thus she put you entirely off your guard ; and every thing went on very smoothly, 'till Mrs. Dinley's unexpected arrival, somewhat discomposed her. This lady had been the confidante of the intrigues of her youth ; they had been the dearest of friends at Cambridge, and she dreaded the communications she might make.

Soon after, by your escaping from Lord Pom-poultton, and withdrawing yourself out of her reach, she was disappointed of all the favourite schemes of her heart ; nor did she receive the consolation she expected from Sir Ralph, to whom she immediately imparted what had happened ; for several days elapsed, before he sent her any answer. At last a very angry letter came from him, with a sharp rebuke, at her having exposed herself so unbecomingly in the affair of the elopement ; and a request that she would without delay take up her bond for the thousand pounds he had lent her, as he had immediate occasion for that sum.

The very moment she had read this letter, she ordered her carriage, and set out in a violent rage
for

for Richmond Green ; where Sir Ralph had taken a house for the summer. He was denied to her ; but she declared she would herself see whether he was out, or not ; and forcing her way into the parlour, she found Sir Ralph with a fine shewy woman, taking their coffee sociably together. This sight added to her fury ; she broke out into very violent language, and the lady, who perhaps had often heard the like, shewed herself expert at resenting it ; for catching up a cup of hot coffee, she threw it in Lady Roseville's face.

Sir Ralph, probably thinking that his female friends, were quite equal to the task of settling their own quarrel, prudently slipped away, while Lady Roseville was employed in wiping her face and neck ; who no sooner perceived his flight, than she hurried after him, without venturing to provoke her antagonist further ; but finding her search after Sir Ralph, fruitless, she returned, bursting with rage and resentment to Portman-square.

The next morning as she was stepping into her carriage with an intention of coming to Lincoln's-Inn, to complain to me of her grievances, which she never failed to do when any thing went wrong, though she neglected and treated me very haughtily at other times ; just then, as she was coming to me, two ill-looking fellows produced a writ against her, at the suit of her old friend Sir
Ralph

Ralph Random. At first, she loudly exclaimed against his treachery, and protested she would not stir; but finding the men not to be moved by prayers or menaces, she became quiet and sullen; and with apparent composure, only desired she might be suffered to step to her apartment to fetch some papers of consequence; the bailiff, she said, was welcome to accompany her: accordingly this favour was granted; she was seen to dart towards the mantle piece, and to drink up the contents of a phial——."

"My God!" exclaimed Louisa, "what was it?"

"I understand, Madam," answered Bangrove, "that it was a sort of lotion, she used for her complexion; probably composed (as the physicians think) chiefly of white lead: the bailiff however, naturally supposed it was some cordial she had taken; and as soon as she had got her papers, she suffered herself to be put into a hackney coach, and carried to the Sheriff Officer's house. All at once, while they were on their way, she clapped her hands together, and staring wildly, exclaimed "Oh God! what have I done! O Sir, I am poisoned!"

The bailiff suspecting this was some trick to get away, carelessly said, "he warranted her Ladyship had taken nothing, but what was very good; he could have wished she had spared him a drop."

he

Lady Roseville, who now most heartily repented her rash action, which she has since said, the violence of her despair, and her rage against Sir Ralph, had impelled her to commit,—persisted in saying, she was poisoned, and called vehemently for help. Indeed, she looked so dreadfully, that the Bailiff began to be somewhat alarmed, 'till he had settled in his own mind, that she was gone mad.

In this condition, she arrived at Mr. Soane's house; and the violent sickness and cold sweat which trickled down her face, plainly proved that she was very ill; however, it was sometime before she could make the people of the house understand what she had done; but her agonies which increased every instant, obliged them to send for a physician, and at the same time, by her desire, they informed me of what had happened.

I went directly to Lady Roseville, and found her in a deplorable condition. Part of what I have related, I gathered from some letters she gave me to read, and the rest from herself, when she was able to speak.

I lost no time in sending an express to you, Miss Roseville; and I sent for Mrs. Lacely to wait upon her Lady. Then I went to Portman-square, where I found every thing in sad confusion,

sion, and an execution in the house; for Lady Roseville had not been sincere in the disclosure of her debts. I contrived however, to save your effects, Madam, from plunder; they are safe.

Thus, Madam, I have given you, to the best of my abilities, a true and faithful narration of this tragical event; produced entirely by the indulgence of criminal passions; for Lady Roseville's fortune, and situation in life were such, that she might have been as happy as respectable.

If I have been betrayed into too great a freedom of speech, in the course of this detail, I crave your pardon, Madam; assuring you I meant no harm, for there is no lady living, whom I respect so much as yourself."

Louisa said, that unfortunately circumstances had been such, as to render it necessary in some degree to dispense with delicacy, but that she hoped he would conceal from the world what had happened, and, if possible, save her mother's fame from disgrace. She then gracefully thanked him for his attentions to her mother and self; and retired with Mrs. Raby, quite sick at heart, owing to the painful sensations she had endured during this recital.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LADY Roseville's disorder now seemed to take a different turn; she was become more calm, but she suffered in every limb with cramp and convulsive spasms; she dozed perpetually, but seemed not refreshed; loathed all food, and when she spoke, it was generally in an incoherent manner. The physician said she might last some days in this way.

Louisa, to be ready at all times to attend her mother, had a mattress spread on the floor in her chamber; and, except during a short visit which she received every morning from Mrs. Raby, for three days and nights she never left her chamber. But her health suffered from her confinement, and still more from her anxiety.

The post now brought her a letter from Doctor Sandolph, which had followed her from Weymouth.

The good old man, who at the time he wrote to her, knew nothing of her present melancholy situation, began his letter, by congratulating her on her escape from Lord Pompoultou, whose base conduct he mentioned with abhorrence. He was rather less severe in his animadversions on Lady Roseville, out of delicacy to Louisa; but he quite approved

approved of her resolution never to return home, and advised her to continue with her amiable friend, Mrs. Raby, 'till he could find an eligible residence for her. He lamented, that a severe fit of the gout, which had seized him immediately after his return from Wales, prevented his attending her at Weymouth; and added, "though I cannot have the happiness of seeing my dear child at present, at least I have the comfort of viewing her resemblance. My niece, who has really a great genius for painting, has contrived, from memory, to produce a most beautiful portrait of you. The Duke, and Lord William, are paying great court to her, to do a copy of it for them, particularly the latter, who, but for one circumstance, would be in love with you; but nobody, without your permission, shall have a picture of you, excepting myself."

This letter darted a ray of light into Louisa's mind, and convinced her she had wronged Lord Danefield. She now found a key to those expressions, which had so severely chagrined her, in the scrap of the letter she had found at Mrs. Stanford's, and could no longer doubt that Lord William was the writer of it.

In the evening, while she was musing over Doctor Sandolph's letter, she received a note from Mrs. Raby, excusing herself, on account of a violent

lent

lent cold, for not having called upon her that day, and earnestly pressing her, if Lady Roseville was tolerably composed, to go out for an hour to take the air, for which purpose she had sent her carriage.

Louisa, who longed to justify Lord Danefield to her friend, thought, as Lady Roseville was asleep, she might venture to absent herself from home a short time, and stepping into the carriage, ordered the servant to drive to Hill-street. Mrs. Raby had no difficulty in believing that Lord Danefield had not been unfaithful to her friend, who, she imagined, possessed sufficient merit to fix any heart; and she did not doubt being able very speedily to remove his jealous suspicions the first time she should see him: the hurry and confusion, in which she had been of late, had not made her unmindful of Louisa's concerns; and she had sent to Lord Danefield to acquaint him she was in town; but from Mrs. Stanford she learned, that he was gone into the country for a few days, so she was obliged to postpone her explanation 'till his return.

Louisa, always uneasy about her mother, staid a very little while in Hill-street; and having no scruple of calling upon Mrs. Stanford, since Lord Danefield was absent, she thought she would, in her way home, just stop at her door, that she might not

appear quite negligent of a person who had been so kind to her.

It was near dusk when the carriage stopped at Mrs. Stanford's door; but there was sufficient light for her to distinguish the fine figure of a gentleman, who seemed just to have alighted from his horse, and had the knocker in his hand, when, upon seeing a servant advance towards the door, he turned round, and discovered to Louisa a form, seldom absent from her thoughts, that of Lord Danefield himself!

He recognized her at the same moment, his first impulse seemed to be to fly towards her, but a second thought probably checked him, for he only bowed very gravely. Louisa, scarce knowing what she did, bowed in her turn. The door remained shut.

Lord Danefield, somewhat recovered from his first surprize, had leisure to cast some glances towards the carriage; and perceiving how extremely pale and wan Louisa looked, every sentiment gave way to apprehension. "Are you ill, Miss Roseville?" said he, drawing near to the coach door.

"Not very well, my Lord," and a tear stood in her eye.

"Good God! what is the matter? Has any misfortune befallen you?"

"Why should your Lordship enquire? Nothing

thing that concerns me, can be interesting to you."

"Not interesting to *me*!"

A maid at that instant opened the door, and said her mistress was gone out. Lord Danefield had been too much affected by Louisa's last words, to attend to any thing else; he had opened the coach door, and was letting down the step to hand her out, when she interrupted him,

"Mrs. Stanford, Lord Danefield, is not at home."

"How unlucky!" cried he, clapping his hand to his forehead, "this moment might have brought ease to my tortured mind. Let me attend you home."

"That cannot be, my Lord."

"When, and where then, will you see me?" said he, eagerly.

"Alas! my Lord, I know not; I have no habitation fit to receive you in; am in a small lodging with my mother, who, I fear, is dying."

"And where, dear Louisa," cried Lord Danefield, quite melted into love and pity; "where is this lodging?"

"On Holborn Hill.

"Good God! what a place! What can occasion her being there? You distract me with apprehensions. And are you now going home?"

“ This instant.”

“ O Louisa, dear Louisa, I must see you; I fear I have been greatly to blame.”

“ I must hasten home. We have both been to blame, but at present I must bid you adieu.”

This conversation appeared to Louisa like a dream; but it was so soothing to her heart, that she could have wished never to have awaked again; and Lady Roseville passing a very quiet night, Louisa herself rested better than usual.

Early next morning, she was told somebody wished to speak with her, and she found Lord Danefield in the parlour; immediately after he had parted from her the preceding night, he hastened to see Mrs. Raby, and received from her such a thorough explanation of all that had created a misunderstanding between him and Louisa, that he felt nothing but compunction for his own behaviour, and excessive sorrow that she had been exposed to such shocking scenes as those Mrs. Raby described. Before she had been thus explicit with him, she had exacted his solemn promise, that whatever he might hear, he should not fancy himself obliged to become Louisa's champion; but in her recital, Mrs. Raby took care to soften some circumstances relative to Lord Pompoultton's conduct at Weymouth, lest he should forget his promise.

Lord

Lord Danefield's indignation did indeed run very high ; but the assurances he received of Louisa's tender attachment to him, made every angry passion subside into joy and transport. He would have gone that very evening to have seen Louisa, had not Mrs. Raby prevented him. But nothing could hinder his going to her very early the following morning ; and as soon as she appeared, he bent one knee, and seizing her hand, " can you," cried he, " beloved Louisa, forgive my horrible injustice ? I have seen Mrs. Raby ; I need add no more ; indeed I am truly grieved, and ashamed to think, that I should have contributed to the sufferings of an angel, for such your fortitude, on the most trying occasions, entitles you to be called."

" You must not be severe upon yourself, Lord Danefield," said she, " I too have been unjust, and perhaps have less to say in my excuse. But if you feel like me, all that we have suffered from our absurd suspicions, is made up to us, by the satisfaction we mutually find in this moment of restored confidence."

Lord Danefield confessed this was true ; and a very tender conversation ensued. In talking over what had passed, he observed, that after having obtained Lord Melvern's consent (given, he owned, with reluctance) to act as he pleased, she must

imagine what his agonies must have been, when he found (as he thought) all his hopes blasted, and heard his rival brag of her kindness!

It was natural both parties should be eager to have the mystery of the letters Lord Daneſfield ſaid he had written, cleared up; and Louiſa wiſhing to know how he had obtained Lord Melvern's conſent, he gave the following account of what had paſſed, ſubſequent to the time he had left her at Stretley.

He ſaid, that on his return to Melvern, he found Lord Melvern ſo ill, that it was impoſſible to think of ſpeaking to him on the buſineſs he had ſo much at heart; and after waiting a couple of days, without finding one favourable moment, he had written to her to inform her of this.

" Which letter never reached me," ſaid Louiſa, interrupting him.

" It was certainly ſtopped by Lady Roſeville," ſaid Lord Daneſfield; " however, you may imagine that I was not a little mortified at not hearing from you."

He then ſaid, in continuation, that the phyſicians having adviſed Lord Melvern to go to Aix-la-Chapelle, his Lordſhip ſet out for that place, and he came to town to mount guard, with a reſolution of following Lord Melvern. No letter coming from Louiſa, and the moſt alarming accounts arriving

rising of the increase of Lord Melvern's disorder, he grew quite wretched; and the day before he left London (for he had delayed his journey from day to day, hoping still he should hear from her) he thought he would call at Lady Roseville's house, and enquire whether the family was still at Stretly; but to his surprize, he saw Lady Roseville just alighting from her carriage. He thought he observed that she coloured at sight of him, but quickly recovering herself, she said, with a smiling air, "the person for whom I suspect this visit was intended, is not here; I left her in Shropshire, being come to town only for a few days;" and perceiving that out of civility, he seemed inclined to follow her, she said,

"I don't ask your Lordship to come in, as I am going to dress in great haste, to be ready to accompany a party to dine in the country."

"Good God!" cried Louisa, "why I must have been at that time in her house!"

Lord Danefield continued, "not having the least suspicion that Lady Roseville had deceived me, I wrote to you again, directing my letter as before, to Stretly, and then I hastened to *Aix-la-Chapelle*; where I had the comfort of finding Lord Melvern in a very fair way of recovery.

I immediately made a candid disclosure of the state of my heart, assuring him at the same time,

that though I could not in honour pretend to Lady Almeria's hand, my affections being devoted to another, yet such was my respect for him, that nothing should induce me to form any connection, which he did not approve of: but that I thought, just and discerning as I knew him to be, that the merit of the object I adored was such, as could not fail of obtaining his sanction to an union, on which my happiness depended.

Lord Melvern looked chagrined, but said, that whatever disappointment he might feel on this occasion, he was sensible he had no right to controul me; that since I had not been able to bestow my affections on his daughter, he must confess, our union could not have made those objects most dear to him, happy in each other; that he was glad, in an affair of such consequence as an establishment for life, I had not been guided merely by passion; as he had heard you had great merit, and that he rejoiced the lady I had chosen was descended from a very ancient honourably family, adhering to his opinion, that fortune was less to be considered than blood. But, added he, "'tis lucky that here there is fortune likewise; for you have, I am sorry to say, but too much occasion for it."

Then assuring me, that I had been perfectly right in believing he never would withhold his consent to any measure wherein my happiness was

con-

concerned, he begged leave, he said, to remind me, that some little delicacy being due to Lady Almeria, he could wish that my marriage were not concluded 'till I came of age, which would be in a very few months, and in the mean while not to suffer it to be spoken of, as it would have a better appearance to the world, that the objection to the union projected for me with Lady Almeria, should seem to originate with her. He then added, that every thing in his power should be done, to settle to my satisfaction the pecuniary affairs between us.

You may believe, my dear Louisa," continued Lord Danefield, " that it was not without the greatest reluctance I could consent to postpone my happiness a moment, much less three or four months. However I could not refuse to concede to my estimable friend's wishes.

And having thus settled this interesting business, and avoided an explanation with Lady Almeria, which must have been very awkward to us both, her father himself undertaking it, after a very short stay at *Aix-la-Chapelle*, I returned to London, impatient to throw myself at your feet. There, I learned from my sister, that you and Lady Roseville were separated; that she had had the happiness of your company for near a week, and that you were gone to Mrs. Raby at Weymouth.

I staid only one night in town, so eager was I to see you, though rather piqued at your never writing to me.

I will pass over the scene at Weymouth; the remembrance of it fills me with anger against myself. When I got back to London, my sister seeing me in a state bordering on distraction, prevailed on me to reveal the cause to her. She seemed extremely surprized when I told her the good understanding between you and Lord Pompouston. Some expressions escaped her, which excited my curiosity, and finding I would be satisfied, she owned that nothing could amaze her more than this circumstance, after what she knew had recently passed; and then she told me of Lord Pompouston's abominable attempt to carry you to Scotland. I had a great mind to have returned to Weymouth to have seen him once more; but I forbore, out of respect to you, who seemed to have entirely forgiven him.

Mrs. Stanford, however, was still convinced, that you did not mean to marry him; and she suggested the notion, that Lady Roseville, who had taken such unworthy methods to promote an union between you and that vile man, had not thought it expedient that any of my letters should reach you.

This indeed I began myself to think; but I

retained my suspicions, that Lord Pompouston had at last conciliated your affection, and in this frame of mind, I had the audacity to write a very angry letter to you——”

Here Lord Danefield was interrupted by a message from Lady Roseville to Louisa, desiring to see her instantly; and the latter excusing herself from returning to him again that morning, he departed, after a tender farewell, assuring her, that he hoped the following day to receive a positive promise from her, that she would bless him with her hand, the very day after he should come of age.

There were two subjects on which Louisa wished to confer with her mother. One was, to prevail upon her to suffer a clergyman to come and read prayers to her. The other, to unfold to her the prospect she had of being united to an amiable man; not doubting, but that as Lady Roseville really thought herself dying, and had shewn some affection for her since her illness, it would afford her great comfort to know that she would not be left unprotected.

At the first mention of prayers, Lady Roseville exclaimed, “pray don’t teaze me. I neglected praying when I was well and happy—and now—No, I can’t think of it.”

Louisa ventured however to re-urge her request, telling her that repentance, and a hearty inclina-

tion to do right, would, she humbly hoped, procure from a merciful God, pardon for past omissions.

“ Omissions! say rather commissions!” cried Lady Roseville; “ but ’tis too late to repent now, and this subject only renews the horrors of my mind.”

“ And what, my dear mother, could compose your mind so well, as the conversation of some pious sensible divine?”

“ No more. Oh! for one moment of peace *here!*” cried she, laying her hand on her breast.

Louisa, inexpressibly shocked, continued silent some time; at last, however, she hinted that she had seen Lord Danefield, whose intended marriage being broken off, he had made her proposals, which, she hoped, would meet with her approbation.

“ My approbation was not asked,” said she, “ when first he proposed to you; I am not ignorant of that transaction. My death will soon enable you to follow your own inclinations; had you shewn more complaisance to mine, I should not now have been in this miserable condition.”

Louisa, secretly disgusted at her indelicacy, in recurring to a subject, in which she had acted so culpable a part, only took notice of the first part of this speech, forbearing to mortify her, by enquiring

quiring how she had gained her intelligence; and said, that it was true, Lord Danefield had mentioned to her, in Shropshire, his wish of being united to her; but that she had rendered Lord Melvern's consent a previous condition to granting her's; and that she had deferred communicating this matter, 'till she knew Lord Melvern's sentiments; never, however, intending to be deficient in the duty and respect due to her—and then she timidly asked, whether she would allow Lord Danefield to see her for a moment.

“ No,” cried she angrily, “ not for an instant; I never liked that man.”

Louisa, vexed and afflicted, refrained from attempting to mollify a disposition, which even on the brink of the grave, retained its wonted bad propensities.

The truth was, Lady Roseville having, in fact, intercepted Lord Danefield's letters (which were found among her papers) and told him a positive lie, was ashamed to see him; not possessing that greatness of mind, which prompts many to confess, and atone for their errors.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the morning, Louisa finding her mother as well as the preceding evening, did not send to forbid Lord Danefield's visit. He arrived just as she was sitting down to breakfast. His countenance beamed with tenderness—"Ah, my Louisa," cried he, after the first salutation was over, "how could I wound your gentle heart, by sending you that vile letter? I do assure you, no sooner was it gone past recall, than I repented having sent it; nor can you conceive a being more wretched than I was from that time, till I met you at my sister's door. I was then just returned from the country, whither I flew to try and dissipate my chagrin; but I could not fly from myself—think then, what I must have felt, when chance brought you before me, pale, dejected, and interesting beyond description.

Now, my beloved, I claim your promise to unfold to me, all that you have thought of your Danefield."

Louisa, unacquainted with coquetry; tender, delicate, and generous in her sentiments, now that all obstacles and jealousies were removed, frankly avowed to Lord Danefield, the partiality she had so long felt in his favour.

En-

Eraptured by a confession so delicious to a lover, he had fallen on one knee before her ; and while he ardently pressed her hand to his lips, entreated her to promise, that nothing should prevent their union ; and that from that moment, he might be allowed to consider her as his wife elect.

Louisa was just going to give him this satisfaction, when the door bounced open, and Mrs. Dinley appeared. Nothing could be more *mal à propos* than her arrival—Louisa, blushing deeply, and vexed to be thus surprized, stood motionless ; and Lord Danefield (who had quickly got upon his legs) was so provoked at this woman's intrusion, that he advanced a few paces towards her, with a fierceness of aspect, that brought Louisa to her recollection, and courteseying formally, she desired her to be seated.

Mrs. Dinley, who was naturally quick sighted, perceived she was a very unwelcome visitor. Louisa indeed, had taken no great fancy to her before ; and Bangrove's relation, had not raised her in her esteem.

Mrs. Dinley said, she was just arrived in town ; whither she had come on hearing of her poor friend's illness, whom she desired to see immediately.

Louisa offering to prepare Lady Roseville for her visit, Lord Danefield judged it prudent to depart.

Louisa,

Louisa, no sooner mentioned Mrs. Dinley's arrival, than her mother exclaimed with a very disturbed air, " Good God ! what can bring her, and at this moment to ? " Then pausing, " tell her I can't see her ; indeed I can't. "

" Must I give her this mortifying message ? " said Louisa.

" O, no ; I don't know what to do—she must not be affronted—tell her I am very ill—yet—perhaps I ought—no, no ; I can't. "

At last, after a painful conflict with herself, and wavering in this manner for a quarter of an hour, she ordered her to be admitted, and said, she must speak with her alone.

The conversation lasted so long, that Louisa became extremely uneasy on her mother's account, who she apprehended, would be quite wearied out : while she was debating with herself, whether she ought not to interrupt it, she was summoned, and found Lady Roseville just coming out of a fit, and so visibly altered for the worse in her looks, as to alarm her exceedingly. She was going out, to give orders for the physician to be sent for, when Mrs. Dinley, who seemed likewise to have been affected, stopped her. " Stay, Miss Roseville, " said she, " I am charged to make a very disagreeable discovery to you ; but Lady Roseville is at
last

last convinced, that her mind will be lighter, when she is no longer conscious of an imposition."

Louisa trembled ; she opened her mouth, as if to speak ; her hands were involuntarily raised, and she waited in silent horror, for Mrs. Dinley to continue.

" Be not shocked, Madam," said she ; " though you are not Sir Edward Roseville's daughter, you owe your birth to a man of high rank ; who, were he now alive, would, upon hearing he had such a daughter, traverse half the globe, to fold you to his breast : he was the most gentle and tender of mankind."

" Almighty God !" cried Louisa, " what is it I hear ? O hasten to relieve me from this cruel suspense—was Prince *Ormanzoff* my father ?"

At the sound of this name, Lady Roseville uttered a faint scream. " Too sure he was," cried she, " cruel wretch that I was ! Ah ! *Ormanzoff* !—injured *Ormanzoff* !" and heaving a dreadful groan, she appeared for a few moments convulsed, with excruciating agonies ; and these all at once subsiding, her eyes closed, never to open more.

Louisa, who had been trying to give her some relief, finding none could be given, overcome with grief and horror, sunk down in a deep swoon by the side of the bed.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dinley, having called some assistance, conveyed her to the adjoining room, where, with proper assistance, after some time, she recovered.

Mrs. Raby, who, in the interim, had arrived, insisted upon her immediate removal from this sad scene.

“ Ah ! no,” cried Louisa mournfully, “ no ; would you have me neglect the last sad duties due to my unfortunate mother ? ”

Mrs. Dinley assured her, that she would undertake to perform them. “ Nothing that is proper, shall be omitted ; ” said she. “ Do, Miss Roseville, pray be persuaded to devolve that task upon me ? ”

“ Roseville ! do you still call me ? ” eagerly exclaimed Louisa, “ that name henceforth cannot belong to me. ”

Mrs. Raby, who was ignorant of the late discovery, apprehending her friend's intellects were affected, conjured her, if she had the least regard for her, not to refuse accompanying her home ; reminding her, that she could be no longer of any use to her mother, and to stay there, could only injure her health.

Louisa, without seeming to attend to her, sat silent, with her eyes stupidly fixed on the ground.

Mrs. Raby, finding nothing she could urge, produced the least change in her friend, whispered
in

in her ear, " my dear Louisa, if you don't mind distressing your poor Emily, at least, for Danefield's sake, do not refuse to take care of yourself ;" gently endeavouring to make her rise.

" Danefield !" cried Louisa, as if suddenly awaking from a deep sleep, " Danefield ! Oh God !" and she put her hand before her eyes ; and her breast heaving violently, at length she burst into tears. Mrs. Raby did not attempt to stop them, but when the first effusion was past, she again urged her departure, to which Louisa consented, not having spirits to argue on the propriety of her stay.

Just as they were leaving the room, Lord Danefield, who had loitered in the neighbourhood, impatient to see Louisa again, and to hear her finally settle his fate, finding the door of the house open, Mrs. Raby's servants standing by, waiting for their lady, walked straight into the parlour ; and immediately guessed, by the confusion he observed, that Lady Roseville was dead.

Louisa's back was turned, so that she did not see him enter ; but hearing the door shut, she looked round, O Heaven !" cried she, sinking into a chair.

Lord Danefield flew to her, " my love ! my angel !" cried he, in a half whisper, " I could not
rest

rest till I had seen you again. Be comforted ; your Danefield will dry your tears."

" Leave me, my Lord," cried Louisa, in a faint voice, " I am going hence this instant. Ah ! Lord Danefield, you know not the cruel stroke that has fallen upon me—happiness is for ever fled !"

" O no," cried Lord Danefield, " talk not so ; this event you have long expected, and you will bear it with your wonted fortitude."

" Ah ! you know not all—but—adieu my Lord ! Adieu, dear Lord Danefield !" and Louisa, with a very animated action, took his hand, and pressing it tenderly between hers, cast her eyes upon him with a look of such tenderness and unutterable woe, as melted him to the soul ; and then taking Mrs. Raby under the arm, hurried into the carriage.

Immediately on her arrival in Hill-street, Mrs. Raby, perceiving she seemed excessively ill, and that she complained of a violent pain in her head, with a tightness across her chest, prevailed on her to go to bed ; but not till she had informed her of the closing scene of her mother's life, which amazed and shocked Mrs. Raby, who could not help secretly wishing the discovery of Louisa's birth, seemingly so painful to her delicacy, had not been made.

Towards

Towards night Louisa grew so much worse, that Mrs. Raby, who had not left her a moment, sent for her own physician to see her.

He found her in a high fever, and ordered her to be bled immediately ; but this operation did not seem to relieve her ; her fever continued with unabated strength, and her head became much disordered. She talked incessantly of her mother, Prince *Ormanzoff*, and of Lord Danefield. A blister was then applied, and every other remedy tried, that Doctor Janssen's skill and experience suggested. He called frequently to see her, but without finding any amendment.

In the mean while, Lord Danefield, half distracted at hearing of Louisa's illness, was seldom during the day time, out of Melcomb's house ; and frequently would steal to Louisa's door, to listen how she breathed. He insisted upon more advice being called in. The house would have been crowded with the faculty, if his representations had been attended to.

Mrs. Raby, nearly as miserable, but more composed, trusted much in Doctor Janssen's skill, and in the efficacy of James's powder, which he had prescribed. The fifth day, the fever beginning to abate, Doctor Janssen had hopes of subduing it entirely, by means of that admirable medicine.

Lord Danefield seldom saw Mrs. Raby, who
was

was usually in her friend's apartment; but the first morning that Doctor Janssen had pronounced her better, Mrs. Raby came down to impart to his Lordship the favourable change.

Lord Danefield, overjoyed at the news, actually clasped Mrs. Raby in his arms, "God Almighty be praised!" cried he; "a thousand blessings on you, for your care of her!"

"Check these transports," said she; "we must not yet be too sanguine; she is still very ill."

Lord Danefield's countenance immediately fell.

"Don't cruelly crush my joy;" cried he, "don't alarm me with doubts—you know she will recover; and then she will be mine, mine for ever!"

Mrs. Raby sighed; but made no answer. And at that moment, the good Doctor Sandolph, with tottering step, and leaning upon crutches, appeared before them.

"Where, where is my child?" cried he, in a weak tremulous voice; "lead me to her this instant." And he was turning towards the stairs.

"Stop, stop, my good Sir;" cried Mrs. Raby, "your abrupt appearance might be fatal to her, so dear to us all!" looking at Lord Danefield. "Give me leave," continued she, "to go and see how she does; and if I find her tolerable, to prepare her to receive you."

Doctor Sandolph assented, and Mrs. Raby being

ing gone, some tender but melancholy compliments passed between the old, and the young man.

" I should have been here long since," said the former, had not I been extremely ill myself; and I believe the anxiety I felt about Miss Roseville, as soon as I had heard from Mr. Bangrove, of the rash act that wretched woman Lady Roseville had committed, made me much worse: However, I sat out the very moment I was able to bear the least motion; but impatient as I have been to get to my dear Louisa, it was impossible for me to travel otherwise than by slow journies. On the road I met Mr. Bangrove's express to apprise me of Lady Roseville's death, and of my darling child's severe illness. But thank God, Mr. Melcomb, whom I have just seen, tells me she is better."

" Yes, I hope she is," cried Lord Danefield eagerly; " yes, she is better, will soon be well, and she will be mine; you, my dear Sir, I know will give her to me."

" Ah! that I will with my whole soul, if Lord Melvern consents."

" He has consented; my beloved herself has told me, that she loves me; I remember those delightful words escaped her charming lips, and now were she but well——."

Mrs. Raby appearing at the door, beckoned
Doctor

Doctor Sandolph, "Come along, Sir," cried she, Louisa is quite calm, and impatient to see you."

"And may not I see her?" cried Lord Dane-field, running after Mrs Raby, "will she not see me too?"

"Not now, my Lord, another time perhaps."

"Perhaps! unkind Mrs. Raby! Is there then a doubt of her seeing me?"

"Detain me not at present; to-morrow I will see you again."

"To-morrow!" mournfully echoed Lord Dane-field, but Mrs. Raby and Doctor Sandolph were already on the stairs in their way to Louisa's chamber.

That good old man's fortitude nearly forsook him, when he found his dear ward scarcely able to express her satisfaction at seeing him, otherwise than by pressing his hand, and faintly smiling upon him. Yet, the darkness of the room prevented his discovering how much she was altered.

Mrs. Raby, who had been particularly charged to keep her very quiet, would not let him stay but a very little while, and she hastened to get him back into the drawing room.

She then acquainted him with those circumstances, with which he was still unacquainted; and he heard with the greatest amazement, the singular

singular discovery which had preceeded Lady Roseville's death.

"Louisa certainly," said Mrs. Raby, "as she has an excellent heart, is touched at her mother's death, especially as it was brought on by such dreadful means. But, my good Sir, she was prepared for that misfortune, and in my opinion nothing has affected her so much, as to have been the subject of a culpable imposition on the Roseville family."

The Doctor, who was an excellent man, though without any very refined feelings, could not comprehend why she should be so much grieved at a circumstance of which (however odious) she was entirely innocent; and after a little more conversation upon this subject, he was glad to go and repose his feeble frame at his lodgings in Bond-street; whither he sent to Bangrove to come to him.

Bangrove, who had long found a secret, one of the heaviest burthens in the world, hastened to tell him what he had just heard from Mrs. Raby. Mrs. Dinley having a great while before communicated to Bangrove the mystery of Louisa's birth. Nor had it been without infinite difficulty, that he had forborn (in consequence of a solemn promise she had exacted from him) to mention it to Louisa.

Doctor Sandolph observed, that it was no wonder such an accumulation of horrors, had been too much for her. " Her gentle nature," cried he, " has sunk beneath them, and God knows whether she will recover !"

A disagreeable explanation next ensued, in regard to the late Lady Roseville's affairs; she had left no will; but Doctor Sandolph, from friendship to Louisa, authorized Bangrove to make the necessary arrangements, and ordered her remains to be decently interred.

Doctor Sandolph, however curious he was to learn by what means Lady Roseville had imposed upon her husband, and his family, would not enquire into them, 'till the person whom they most concerned, was herself in a condition to hear the relation, which he understood Mrs. Dinley, was best qualified to give.

Louisa continued to mend. Doctor Sandolph the next morning had the satisfaction to hear her express the comfort she received from his visit; and the day following, she was so much better as to enter into a little conversation with him.

" You have heard, my good friend," said she, faintly, " that your poor Louisa has no name; no rank in society, that she was made the instrument of imposition. But how this vile affair was contrived,

trived, is still unknown to me, and it behoves me much to know it."

Why worry yourself, my dear child," said Doctor Sandolph, "with reflections on this matter? you are innocent; you have not sought to impose upon any one; what have you to do with the crimes of others? And very shortly, you will have both name and rank; you will be Lord Danefield's wife, who adores you."

"Spare me on this subject, my dear Sir," cried Louisa; "I am weak, very weak; but yet I must tell you that I can never, no never, bear the name of Danefield."

"What am I mistaken; do you not love him then?"

"Love him!" cried Louisa, "he is dearer to me than life itself; yet——," she paused.

"I am all amazement! What love him, and yet protest you will not marry him! Why, my dear Louisa, what can this mean?"

"I am not able to give my reasons now, for what seems an inconsistency to you."

"The subject indeed, had better not be discussed at present; think of nothing now but your health. I will see you again very soon, and shall hope to find you well, and *reasonable*." Which last word was said with a strong emphasis, as he left the room.

In the mean while Lord Danefield, whose heart was gladdened by the accounts he heard of Louisa's amended health, demanded to see her with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. And Louisa, though her heart shrunk from this interview, desired him to be informed, that she would see him, the first day her strength would permit her going down into the drawing-room, with which delay he most reluctantly acquiesced.

It was with infinite concern, that Mrs. Raby perceived the deep melancholy that seemed settled on Louisa's spirits. Formerly the name of Lord Danefield, (except during an interval of jealousy) had a magic influence over her countenance, animating it with joy and delight: but now, it only added to it a more expressive character of anguish; and Mrs. Raby too plainly discovered, that from an excess of delicacy, she would not in the humbled state, in which she was thought by herself alone, consent to marry Lord Danefield.

Louisa now became very impatient to see Mrs. Dinley; and as she was so much better, her friends consented to the admission of this woman, who had frequently called to enquire after her health during her illness; and a day being fixed for her dining Hill-street; she came accordingly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOUISA desired Mrs. Raby, and Doctor Sandolph, to be present at her interview with Mrs. Dinley. It was not without visible emotion, that she received her; all the sensations of horror, grief, and astonishment, which she had felt when first the fatal discovery was made, now recurred again.

But she endeavoured at composure, while she addressed Mrs. Dinley as follows:

“ Nothing certainly can be more painful to a daughter, or more contrary to the general order of nature, than for her to scrutinize into the conduct of her parent. But such is my unpleasant situation, that though I could wish to consign to oblivion, the memory of those actions, that being disclosed, must criminate my mother; yet, it seems a justice due to myself, before I finally determine what reparation is due to the Roseville family, clearly to have the fact ascertained, that a supposititious child, has been introduced into it.

Do not, therefore, I conjure you, conceal from me any circumstance relative to this affair: if you were unhappily drawn in to be a party concerned in it, you have since had leisure to repent; and cer-

tainly cannot refuse to make every atonement in your power.

Possibly a mistaken idea of friendship, might have occasioned you to deceive yourself, and not to consider that this action militates against every idea of honour and justice."

Mrs. Dinley looked extremely abashed, and Louisa, willing to encourage her, added, "I do not wish to give you pain, I am only desirous of inducing you to be sincere in the confession I require. You seemed surprized at my having mentioned (Alas! very unfortunately) Prince *Ormanzoff's* name: I shall therefore inform you, that chance brought me intimately acquainted with him just before he died; and that I am in possession of papers, which detail the whole of his sad story. — Here is his picture, which he bequeathed to me. Alas! he little thought that the bequest was made to his own daughter!"

"It is very like what I remember him to have been," said Mrs. Dinley, "and the first time I had the honour of seeing you, I was so struck with your strong resemblance to him, that I could not help whispering it to your mother; yet, at the same time I thought you had much of her air."

"You need only relate," said Louisa, "the transactions subsequent to my mother's marriage, as I have already told you, I know all that passed before."

"The

“ The task you have assigned me,” said Mrs. Dinley, “ is not a little humiliating to me, for you will perceive that it was principally by my assistance, that Lady Roseville contrived to impose upon Sir Edward, and his family. However, I submit, and hope my candour at present will induce you, not to censure my past conduct too harshly.

Whatever information you may have received from the Russian Prince, he could not tell you, (because he never was let into the secret) that all your mother’s attempts to destroy the proof of her frailty, proved ineffectual. Fortunately for her, however, about the time that her disgrace appeared inevitable, her husband’s parents insisted upon his going abroad ; and as soon as he was at a distance that precluded his observations, Charlotte (allow me still to use that familiar appellation) announced to himself, and family, that she was with child. Your grandmother, Lady Temple, who had been but lately reconciled to her, invited her to live with her, at least during her husband’s absence ; but Charlotte, who had her reasons for shunning her Ladyship, and all who might interest themselves in her condition, declined her invitation, choosing rather to live sequestered with me in a small house near York. There she was at liberty, under pretence of grief at her husband’s

absence, to refuse receiving much company; and to elude even her servants penetration by passing most of her time in bed, or by never appearing but in a very great dishabille.

She did not long however enjoy quiet, for she was soon much discomposed by receiving a letter from Lady Temple, to say she meant to be with her during her lying-in. An event her Ladyship did not apprehend to be so near by several months, as it was in fact."

Charlotte, who daily expected the awful moment of her delivery to arrive, was in an agitation not to be described. At this period, I formed a plan which I communicated to her, and it revived her spirits.

As we lived but a mile from York, it was easy for me secretly to confer with the gentleman who was to attend her, during her lying-in. I had for some time, taken pains to ingratiate myself with his wife, and had made little presents to his children; indeed, I soon found he was formed of such materials, as would yield to a proper bribe. To diminish his scruples, I cooked up a mighty plausible story (at least he chose to think it so) of a private contract, having, by some months, preceded the trip to Scotland: but that it was of the utmost consequence the family, who had been very unkind to my friend, merely owing to their
pride

pride and avarice, should not suspect this; and I assured him that Mr. Temple himself, would be exceedingly hurt if the child's premature appearance could not be concealed. I had some difficulty to make him comprehend that my plan was feasible; but during our argument, I contrived to slip a bank note of considerable value into his hand, which wonderfully cleared his comprehension.

The next step was, to procure a nurse we could depend upon; and in this, Doctor Edwards assisted us. He mentioned to me the widow of a shoemaker, a poor woman with five small children, who, by the sudden death of her husband, was left in most deplorable circumstances, with a young child at her breast; her mother, the Doctor had frequently met at the houses of his patients, where she was employed as a nurse; she was a very notable industrious woman, and now the charge of maintaining her daughter and little family, fell heavy upon her. Both the old and young woman, were secured as parties in our scheme; their house was in York, and we had every reason to believe none of the servants belonging to us, had the least acquaintance with them.

Every thing being thus prepared, and the family accustomed to see Doctor Edwards a frequent

visitor at our house, he kept himself in readiness to attend your mother at a moment's warning.

As soon as she was taken ill, which happened one morning about seven o'clock, I immediately gave Doctor Edwards a private hint of it, and he came directly, as if by chance. No person had the least suspicion of what was passing in Charlotte's chamber; fear made her stifle her groans, and her maid Mrs. Lacely, and myself, were her only attendants: the month nurse we had hired, being reserved for another occasion, as you will hear presently.

Your mother was ill a very short time, before she was happily delivered of you; whom I immediately put into a basket, which I was accustomed to carry on my arms when I strolled about the garden, and fill it with flowers. With this basket I sallied forth, directing my steps as usual to the garden, where, at a private door that opened into a field, the old woman was in waiting to receive the infant:

As soon as I had delivered my charge to her, I filled my basket with flowers, and returned to the house; and Mrs. Lacely and myself neglected no prudent measures to prevent our secret being divulged."

The second day Charlotte, who was believed by the servants to have been slightly indisposed, had

had the resolution to rise and shew herself without affectation, as a thing of course, in her dressing-room: and the first occasion that seemed naturally to occur for my going to York, I went thither and paid you a visit. I found you a fine thriving child, and extremely well taken care of, by both your nurses. We had provided you ordinary clothes, as any thing in the least fine, might have excited the curiosity of the neighbours, by whom you were supposed to be a tradesman's child, taken in by dame Ansel to nurse.

In the mean while another letter arrived from Lady Temple, to enquire precisely when her daughter-in-law expected to be confined; still flattering herself, she said, that her health would admit of her attendance on her."

To which Charlotte replied, that she did not expect this event to happen in much less than three months; and assured Lady Temple she should find great comfort in her presence. But as nothing in reality was dreaded half so much, we resolved that when she had been married seven months, she should appear to be taken suddenly ill, and with all due form, be brought to bed of you, before Lady Temple could possibly arrive."

It was much less difficult to act this farce, than to execute what we had done a month before, with such happy success. The woman, who

suckled you, was hired as a wet nurse; and her mother was sent for to attend Mrs. Temple. These women, Mrs. Lacely, the Doctor, and myself, being the only persons admitted into her chamber, we all executed our parts with great decorum; and after a reasonable time, such as might naturally be expected, your birth was announced to the rest of the family.

The servants were all very desirous of seeing you, but it was not convenient to indulge them with too near a view, as you were a remarkable large fine child. So you were kept in your cradle, and very little light suffered to come into the room, on account of a pretended weakness in your eyes. Indeed, they saw you very rarely, for your mother affected she could not bear you out of her sight, and for many weeks you were almost always in her apartment.

And pray," interrupted Louisa, "how was I conveyed into the house?"

"Why, the evening before the representation of this farce, I went to York, accompanied by Mrs. Lacely, and brought you to the house in a band-box, pretending it came from a milliner's. But I suffered such terror by your cries all the way, though luckily they ceased before I got home, that I was obliged to carry you into a china closet in an unfrequented part of the house; and I fear you suffered

suffered a good deal that night, for want of your nurse; though I took care to feed you, and I am ashamed to say, I dosed you well with syrup of poppies, to keep you quiet."

"My God!" exclaimed Mrs. Raby, shrugging her shoulders, and giving Mrs. Dinley a look that very nearly sealed up her lips.

Doctor Sandolph, as usual to him when he was discomposed, had recourse to his snuff-box; taking pinch after pinch with great perseverance.

But Louisa very calmly desired Mrs. Dinley, to proceed.

"When Charlotte's feigned sufferings," continued she, "had lasted as long as we thought necessary, I seized a moment when nobody was in the way, to convey you into her apartment. The rest, I have already told you.

"Nothing now of importance remains to mention. Sir John and Lady Temple, expressed some surprize when they heard of your premature birth, but fortunately for my friend, it was some time before her Ladyship (who had been ill) was well enough to come and see her grandchild. I watched her countenance during her first visit, and observed she was all amazement, at seeing such a fine forward child; but I do not think she had any suspicions of the truth.

Mr. Temple had always protested he would

not stay abroad, so long a term as his father had prescribed, but meant to be in England about the time he concluded his wife would be confined. Upon hearing that the event had already happened, he hastened home. We relied so perfectly on his youth, and inexperience in young children, as to be free from alarm on his account: nor were we mistaken; he seemed on his arrival transported with joy at being a father, and he became fonder than ever of his wife.

For some time Mr. and Mrs. Temple lived in great harmony together; though the latter was not quite satisfied at being kept in the country, and in a more œconomical style, than suited with her disposition. She had expected, by marrying a man of fashion, and heir to a large fortune, that she should have indulged in every sort of luxury; but the slender allowance Sir John Temple gave his son, did not permit him to gratify her extravagant wishes.

In the mean while, Doctor Edwards had always some pretence for coming to the house, either to see Charlotte, or her child; his visits incommoded her extremely, and she observed, that Mr. Temple often thought them unnecessary; but sensible how much she was in this man's power, she did not dare to affront him, and was obliged to submit to his very exorbitant charges; so that her purse

purse was perpetually drained by him, or the old woman. Your nurse was of a mild gentle nature ; and not in the least mercenary. People who deviate from the right road, are liable to plagues and torments, of every kind ; such as others have no conception of."

Mrs. Raby, who thought that Mrs. Dinley, so far from seeming ashamed of the part she had acted, appeared rather in her narration, to value herself upon her cleverness, interrupted her.

"I should imagine," said she, "that amidst these torments, the voice of conscience, must be the most troublesome of all ; but I submit to *your* experience in this matter."

Mrs. Dinley coloured ; "I am sorry, Madam," said she, "to be so well qualified to decide, that it is indeed intolerable ; but, I protest, I had no motive for assisting in the deception on the Roseville family, but a tender and faithful attachment to my friend.

Sometime after Mr. Temple's return, Charlotte was released from one of her torments, by the old woman's death ; her daughter was a much better character ; and so attached to her nursling, that with a little humouring, we were tolerably easy about her.

Mr. Charles Temple, who used to be his cousin's greatest friend, had shewn no satisfaction,

at

at the birth of his daughter; he very rarely visited him, and never caressed the child, as every body else did. One day he surprized Doctor Edwards and myself, talking together in a corner of the hall. I was at that moment, by Charlotte's desire, giving him some money. What Mr. Charles Temple thought, I know not, or whether he overheard any part of our discourse; but ever after, I perceived he regarded me with a jealous eye, and always looked gloomy, and out of humour.

Your mother might, had she pleased, have been perfectly happy with Mr. Temple; for he was very good humoured, lively, and agreeable: but I must say, her natural tendency to gallantry, could not long be restrained; nor did she love her husband well enough to attempt concealing the delight she took in indiscriminate admiration. I ventured to represent to her, the danger she incurred of losing her husband's affections; but she never could bear controul, and disregarded all I said.

Mr. Temple, who had now taken the name of Roseville, ignorant of the pains I took to prevent Charlotte from disgracing him and herself, unjustly fancied, that I encouraged her to receive attentions from a young officer, a great favourite of her's. At first, after his marriage, he had been very kind to me; but for some time, he had treated me with a sort of distant civility, bordering upon

con-

contempt ; which, together, with Charlotte's too frequent neglect of me, and inattention to her own character, made me heartily sick of my situation. About this time, Mr. Dinley (an old lover of mine) obtained a college living, which enabled him to offer me his hand ; and a thousand reasons, induced me to accept it.

Immediately after our marriage, we settled in Suffolk. Charlotte affected more grief, than I believe she felt, at parting with me. I always suspected, from the time of your birth, that my presence pained her.

Soon after my departure, Charlotte's husband, disgusted with her conduct, left her, and went abroad, where he died."

" Have you any reason to think," interrupted Louisa, " that Sir Edward ever received any intimation of the circumstances of my birth? A secret known to so many, is seldom faithfully kept."

" It is impossible to say, Madam," answered Mrs. Dinley, " he was of a very reserved disposition ; but certainly, all the while I was in the family, he appeared very fond of you ; yet, it used to strike me as singular, that latterly, he never, when he spoke of you, said, " my daughter, or my child ;" but always Louisa, or the little girl.

As for me, though I frequently received pre-
sents

sents from Lady Roseville, I never saw her, after I had quitted her, 'till I called upon her in Portman-square: but I was true to the confidence she had reposed in me, and kept her secret faithfully."

"Give me leave just to ask," cried Louisa, "how Mr. Bangrove came to know it?"

Mrs. Dinley coloured violently, and stammered in her reply. "I protest I have forgot—I did not intend—but some how or other, he wormed it out of me."

"And Sir Charles Roseville; did not he do the same?" said Mrs. Raby.

"No, Madam;" said Mrs. Dinley, with warmth, glad to prove her innocence in one point, "I have never seen Sir Charles, since I left Lady Roseville's family: however, I know he never scrupled to say, he did not believe Miss Roseville to be his cousin."

"Come, come, Madam," said Doctor Sandolph, "if Sir Charles had these suspicions, are you sure you did not confirm them?"

"No, Sir, never; we were upon such terms, as rarely to converse together—perhaps Doctor Edwards blabbed."

"I wish this fatal secret had not been kept so long from me;" cried Louisa, "but I do not blame you for that; on the contrary, I think myself obliged to you, for having prevailed upon
my

my mother at last to consent it should be revealed. But pray tell me, what became of Doctor Edwards, and my nurse?"

"Why, Madam, Doctor Edwards found an opportunity of settling himself to advantage in a town, at a considerable distance from York; whither he went, to your mother's great joy, when you were about two years of age; and I understand, that he died a few months since, having during his life, constantly received an annuity from your mother.

As for your nurse, she remained with you till you were sent abroad, after Sir Edward's death; where she did not attend you, having a large family of children, which she could not conveniently leave. Lady Roseville gave her twenty guineas a year, till she died, about three years since."

Mrs. Dinley ceased to speak; and Louisa, though she could not esteem her, yet rather pitying the mortification she had endured, and not forgetting the melancholy office she had lately performed, in regard to her mother's remains, presented her, at parting, with a very valuable ring, which had belonged to Lady Roseville; and Mrs. Dinley received it, with many expressions of respect and gratitude.

CHAPTER XXX.

DOCTOR Sandolph, who perceived how extremely shocked his young friend had been at Mrs. Dinley's odious narration, tried, as she still sat absorbed in thought, to direct her attention to a subject which, he was willing to flatter himself, could not be wholly displeasing to her.

"Suffer me, my dear child," said he, "to remind you, that all your friends have not yet had the happiness of congratulating you, on your recovery. Will you allow me to-morrow, to introduce to you *one*, who has perhaps suffered, during your late illness, still more than yourself?"

A faint blush overspread Louisa's pale cheeks. "Ah! my good friend," said she, "I understand you; but alas! to what purpose should we meet? do you imagine, that if Lord Danefield's noble mind, superior to prejudices, should not think me disgraced by the knowledge of my birth, that I would, poor and humbled as I am, carry ruin into his illustrious family?"

And she arose, with a very disturbed air, and was walking towards the door.

"Hold Louisa," cried Doctor Sandolph, "hold: what do you mean? This discovery, though I am sensible it must be very painful to a
mind

mind so delicate as yours, never can be considered as a disgrace, by those who condemn narrow prejudices. The native dignity of your soul raises you above it; and as to your fortune, that is not affected by this circumstance. You have, indeed, diminished it by a few thousands, which your filial tenderness thought due to your mother's urgent occasion for money; and no man, who has a spark of virtue in his breast, but will consider the cause of that diminution, as an honour to your heart. Lord Danefield, I am sure, will love you the better for it; therefore pray, my dear child, don't worry yourself with fantastic notions of poverty and disgrace."

"Why, my dear Sir," said Louisa, with warmth, "surely you do not suppose that I mean to keep any part of Sir Edward Roseville's property? God forbid that I should profit by the imposition practised upon him; I refrain from expressing all the abhorrence I feel at that, out of respect to the memory of the author of it; nor will I dispute with you, what disgrace is real, and what imaginary; your well meant sophistry, however, will not convince me, that illegitimate birth is not disgraceful."

"I must interrupt you," cried Doctor Sandolph, "only to enquire whether you seriously mean to renounce your estate?"

"Most

“ Most assuredly—for it does not appear that any suspicions arose in Sir Edward Roseville’s breast concerning my birth: if he had known of its illegitimacy, it is impossible to suppose he would have wronged his own family, by bequeathing to *me*, the estate in Kent. I feel, therefore, that I have no right to it; and Sir Charles Roseville shall find I am as proud as himself; for I will not knowingly, one moment, impose myself upon the world, as Sir Edward Roseville’s heir; therefore, as soon as I come of age, I am resolved to resign, not only Cherry-dale, to its lawful owner, but likewise all that has accumulated from it. This estate not being entailed, nothing can prevent my doing this act of justice; and I shall have the satisfaction of shewing Sir Charles, that had it been my fate to have belonged to his family, I should not have been unworthy of the name of Roseville.”

“ God of heaven and earth!” exclaimed Doctor Sandolph, “ did any body ever hear such romantic notions of honour and justice?” So then you mean to beggar yourself, to enrich a man already loaded with wealth? I really have no patience to hear your talk so. It does not seem to me quite improbable, but that Sir Edward, latterly, distrusted the truth; yet having so long considered you as his child, he actually loved you as such. This he proved by his last cares and solitudes

tudes being entirely about you, and so anxious was he, that you should receive the best education possible, that he earnestly recommended, on his death bed, that you should be placed under his mother's protection—And now, forgetful of all this, what are you going to do? Why, in a fit of haughty disdain (for I can call it by no other name) you renounce his favours, bestow them where 'tis impossible they can be wanted; and instead of making an amiable man, who adores you, happy, you reject him, and voluntarily embrace poverty."

Louisa saw that her venerable friend was downright angry; grieved, but not convinced, she replied,

"I acknowledge, my dear Sir, Sir Edward's goodness; but he believed his favours were conferred on his daughter, for Mrs. Dinley's conjectures of his suspecting the contrary, are very vague indeed, and do not deserve to be set in opposition to his conduct, which was truly parental. The most that can be presumed is, that had he thought me a supposititious child, he would have made some provision for the wretched being, who was dependant for her existence on his bounty; and this bounty thus bestowed, I would have accepted. But since he died, without this black mystery's being unravelled, it behoves me to do justice to his family.

mily. In regard to my beloved benefactress (for I dare not call her grandmother) I do not scruple to avail myself of her generosity, for two reasons—one is, the certainty that Sir Charles Roseville would have received nothing from her; and the other is, because had any young person lived so many years with her as I did, 'tis natural to suppose, she would have given her something. Her legacy will enable me to discharge all that I undertook for my mother; but there still remains for me a large quantity of very valuable jewels; these, perhaps, Sir Charles may choose to purchase; but at all events they must be sold, and I must subsist upon what they produce. Believe me, Sir, poverty will be the misfortune that I shall feel the least," and her eyes filled with tears.

"A fine subsistence, truly!" cried Doctor Sandolph; "but think not, however I may be unable to prevent it, that I shall ever cease to protest against this strange renunciation. As for your engagements with your mother's creditors, I hold them to be sacred; but mark my words, child; I swear you never shall repay me one sixpence; for if I cannot make you retain *all* that is yours, you shall at least keep that poor pittance. Do not attempt to contradict me; for I will not hear a syllable you can say, having already heard too much; and you will go near to break my heart."

And

And the poor man, clapping his handkerchief over his face, hurried away.

Louisa was touched with tenderness and sorrow to see him thus concerned; but her resolution being founded on principles of equity, remained unshaken.

It was not, however, without suffering a variety of unpleasant emotions, that she began a letter to Sir Charles Roseville, explaining to him the mystery of her birth, and declaring her intention, in the most solemn manner, of renouncing all that she inherited under Sir Edward's will, the moment she came of age; and of yielding it to him, who alone could have a right to it.

As soon as she had dispatched this letter, she found her spirits lighter; but still there remained a cruel trial, which she found it impossible longer to defer.

Her interview with Lord Danefield, with the man whom she adored, and yet was determined to refuse, required a degree of fortitude, which nothing but the most exalted love, abstracted from all selfish considerations, could give.

The next morning she fixed for this important occasion; but the excessive agitation of her spirits, during the night, rendered sleep a stranger to her eyes; and she arose pale, languid, and hardly able to support herself. She felt, however, that a delay

would be useless; and the moment she heard he was arrived, she dragged her feeble form down stairs, and joined him in the drawing room.

Lord Danefield, who had been extremely miserable at being so long kept from her, and who had no suspicion of his misfortune, advanced eagerly, with sparkling eyes, to catch her in his arms: but she gently eluded his embrace with a stifled sigh, and having thanked him for the part he had taken in her illness, mildly begged him to be seated, and, without interrupting her, to listen to what she had to say.

This preface naturally alarmed him; and, giving way to the warm impetuosity of love, he said,

“ I can listen to nothing, Louisa, ’till you have confirmed the promise you were on the point of making that fatal morning, when we were so cruelly interrupted. First say, that you will be mine, and then I will hear what you please.”

Louisa shook her head, but spoke not.

“ Good God!” cried Lord Danefield, “ what means this silence? What am I to think? Speak, Louisa, my love; are you unwilling to be mine?”

“ My sentiments, Lord Danefield,” said Louisa, with a faltering voice; “ are unchanged, not so my situation—I am——”

“ Oh! stop, I conjure you. I know what
you

you allude to; but can you think, Louisa, that this discovery, which Bangrove has communicated to me, can affect my unbounded love and esteem for you? Now, indeed, I have cause to be offended, that you should think so meanly of me."

"Meanly! my Lord; O no; I believe your soul to be truly noble; and though I am far from thinking that disgraced as I am, I ought to be your wife; yet loving you, as I do, were there no other objections than a flaw in my birth, I would still be yours."

"Objections! What objections can there be?" cried Lord Danefield, vehemently.

"Poverty, my Lord—You are too equitable to disapprove of my intention of not withholding any part of the Roseville property, from its lawful owner. Poor and destitute then as I shall become, can you imagine I will involve you, dear Lord Danefield, that I love so tenderly, in my ruin?"

"Talk not of ruin, noble generous Louisa; yes, I approve of your intention; justice dictates it: but when you have nothing left, come to my arms, to the arms of your faithful Danefield, and bring a treasure, a million of times more valuable than the fortune you forego; a treasure, which nothing can impair, because 'tis inherent in yourself."

Louisa affected, beyond imagination, by the warmth and tenderness with which Lord Dane-field spoke; and pleased to find in him such an accordance of principle with her own, laid her hand upon his arm, and pressing it gently, "I believe what you say," cried she, "and if your situation were other than it is, I could not withstand your tender pleading. But, my dear Lord, you know the embarrassment of your affairs, and that it would be absolute ruin to you, to marry an indigent wife—I never could bear to be the cause of it; therefore we must submit to our destiny, cruel as it is—An insuperable bar has arisen between us; and, tho' it breaks my heart to say it, dear Lord Dane-field, we must meet no more, 'till we can meet with indifference."

"Oh! gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Lord Dane-field, "do you thus cast me off? Thus deliberately to plunge a dagger into my heart? Cruel, unkind Louisa! but I will cling to your feet, 'till I melt you into pity. Ah! Louisa, my beloved!" and he knelt down before her, bathing her hands with his tears. "Do not thus refine away your happiness as well as mine. Believe me we are formed for each other, and poverty itself will lose its edge, when it attempts to strike mutual love. Louisa, do not devote to misery the man who lives only for you."

Louisa,

Louisa, dissolved in tears, was unable, for some moments, to reply. Then, with a voice broken by sobs, she said, “ ’tis you, Lord Danefield, who must shew pity ; urge me not on a subject, which tears my heart to pieces. Remember your sister’s conduct, on a similar occasion ; and shall *I* shew less fortitude than she did, when she thought it necessary to reject Captain Stanford ? Ah ! Danefield, my dear Danefield, if you knew what it cost me to refuse you, you would not call me cruel !” and she pressed his hand tenderly between hers, which, however, he hastily withdrew, and rising indignantly,

“ I see, Madam,” cried he, “ that I am indifferent to you, or you would not determine to make me wretched. Ah ! Louisa ! could I have thought that I was destined to receive this blow from you !”

And he hastily paced the room to and fro, in great-disorder.

Louisa, excessively affected, endeavoured, in vain, to pacify him.

“ Were there any prospect, my Lord,” said she, “ of our having a competency, I would still be yours. In regard to myself, Heaven knows, I could live blessed and contented with you in a cottage—But your station in life must be considered. Lord Danefield must not live for himself alone—

nor forget what is due to an illustrious family. A blind passion will be no excuse (his superior understanding and education considered) for his plunging into an abyss, whence he never can be extricated. How little should I deserve the esteem you have told me, that Lord Melvern has conceived for me, if, instead of warning you against, I assisted to push you into it. What must his Lordship think, when instead of an heiress, descended from an ancient family as he believes me to be, he hears that 'tis wretched Louisa, the offspring of guilt, that has, if not seduced you, at least with a culpable weakness, consented to your destruction? Who can say too, that hereafter when the calm voice of reason shall prevail over that of passion, that you might not yourself, though delicacy may prevent your avowing it, regret our mutual imprudence?"

Here Lord Danefield with a gesture of impatience attempted to interrupt her, but she proceeded:

"Bear with me a little longer," said she, "suffer me to represent to you that,—hampered with difficulties; encumbered with domestic cares; reduced almost to insignificance by the pressure of want; obliged to court ministers you may despise, to obtain the precarious favours of a court;—Thus overwhelmed, your spirit, like that of your noble father,

father, may sink under these misfortunes; and should your affection for me remain unimpaired, would not that very circumstance render them doubly severe? Shall I then not avert these evils, and though I inflict and endure cruel pangs at this instant, are they comparable to those, that may only end with life?"

She paused; and Lord Danefield, who had done himself great violence, to forbear interrupting her, said,

" If I have had patience, Louisa, to hear you reason with more philosophy than tenderness, it has been, because I expect you will at least have the indulgence to hear me. You have endeavoured to persuade me, that my happiness is your aim. Yet, 'tis *you* who destroy it; and so far from guarding me from misery, 'tis *you*, who are contriving it for me. Believe me, I am neither so mad as to despise fortune, nor yet so romantic as to think we can live upon love. But I think the enthusiasm of that passion very capable of rendering people insensible to the little inconveniences of a scanty fortune. As to what is due to rank, *that* may be dignified by a man's conduct more effectually, than by the parade of wealth. Yet, I do not pretend to say, that I should not frequently regret, that Lady Danefield could not appear with the splendour which formerly used to be an appen-

dage to that name ; and some mortification I should feel myself, when instead of the hospitality of my ancestors, I should find myself necessitated to shut my doors against my neighbours and tenants——.”

“ Noble generous Lord Danefield !” exclaimed Louisa.

Without regarding this interruption, he proceeded. “ But what are these trifling evils, compared to those, I should feel deprived of you ! the chosen, the beloved of my soul ! How can the idea of disgrace and of Louisa, ever associate together ? Can you suppose, that after having been flattered with a place in your affections, any consideration should induce me, to give up the hopes of calling you mine ? And when no other objection is offered by yourself, than the dimunition of your fortune, can *that* be an objection to *me* ? You say you could be happy with me in a cottage ;—am I less tender, or of a disposition more likely to become fickle, and discontented, than yourself ? Granting that all the difficulties you preface, were to embarrass me ; how could despondency reach that heart, accustomed to be cheered by your smiles ? Formed as you are, my Louisa, to soften every evil, and double every blessing I should enjoy, why resolve to render me wretched now, merely from the vain apprehension, that I should be so hereafter ?

I cer-

I certainly must have failed greatly in describing Lord Melvern's character, otherwise you could not have a doubt of his sentiments. He is much too noble, not to appreciate properly your conduct to Sir Charles ; and were I capable of shrinking from an object so deserving as yourself, he would very justly condemn the meanness of that heart, whose love ceased to glow, because its mistress ceased to be rich. Gracious God! but I will suppress my complaints; and once more have recourse to supplications; let me then entreat you, Louisa, my beloved, who have so long been the sole end and object of my life, to continue to be so. Let me hope, this was only meant as a trial of my affection; and cruel as it is, I will forgive it, provided you will instantly promise, that you will be mine."

Louisa was silent, her head rested upon her hand, and a few deep sighs, escaped her tortured breast.

"Louisa, my angel, Louisa!" said Lord Dane-field, pressing her passive hand to his lips, "speak I conjure you; my life depends upon your answer."

"I cannot speak——my heart is oppressed——leave me, I beg."

"What, before you decide of my fate? Can you expect it?"

“ Indeed, Lord Danefield, I am quite ill. Unable to determine at this instant how to act; impressed with admiration at the generosity of your sentiments—but indeed, I must be alone. May the Almighty bless you!”

And quite overpowered by the conflict within her own breast, she disengaged her hand from his, and hurried out of the room. While with vehemence he called after her, to remind her, that his happiness or misery depending upon her decision, he should suffer the most excruciating suspense, till he had obtained it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AS soon as Louisa reached her apartment, she indulged in the friendly relief of tears.—Softened more than ever into tenderness for Lord Danefield; convinced of the elevation of his mind, and of the perfect sympathy that subsisted between them, she suffered for some little time her imagination to be soothed, with the delightful idea of being united to him. The evils she herself had delineated, seemed touched with more strength of colouring, than truth; and as she considered them, insensibly they faded on her eye, so as almost to become imperceptible.

But the fond delirium of the moment passed away, and reason resuming its wonted force, she again viewed objects through their proper medium. Her soul, though exquisitely tender and sensible, was endued with uncommon fortitude, and capable of suffering the greatest torture, rather than swerve in the least from what she thought right. She adored Lord Danefield; but she considered his honour and interest, beyond the indulgence of passion.

“If,” thought she, “he should persevere in his fond attachment to me, and prove, by his steadiness, that it is founded on a basis that will

not be shaken by any of the casualties of life ; and if, by a strict œconomy he should lessen his debts, and may, without absolute ruin to himself, marry the woman he loves ; then indeed, I shall think all further resistance needless, and that it is incumbent on me, to make the object of my love happy. Even the harsh unfeeling world, could no longer disapprove of an union, not formed by the rash imprudence of youth, but with the reflection of maturer age. However, Danefield shall not know of this reservation of myself ; he shall be left free to follow the dictates of his heart, uninfluenced by any reference towards me ; and that hereafter, should he renew the offer of his hand, I may owe it solely to love, and not to honour."

Louisa having thus settled this point with herself, and felt all the pleasure arising from the consciousness of having subdued the most soft and bewitching of all passions, and consequently the most dangerous, next considered, that her victory would be very uncertain, if she were exposed to the danger of seeing Lord Danefield, or to the well-meant importunities of their mutual friends ; yet, whither to go, she knew not.

While she was musing on these matters, Mrs. Raby came into her apartment ; her eyes appeared as if she had been crying, and she instantly began

began tenderly to reproach Louisa, for making such a man as Lord Danefield wretched.

“ He is gone out of the house,” said she, “ almost distracted. Ah Louisa! by what fatal impulse are you governed? All your actions of late, tend only to make yourself, and those most dear to you, miserable!”

Louisa was trying to vindicate herself, when Bangrove was announced. Mrs. Raby retired, thinking he might have business with her friend; and the latter was not sorry to see him, being determined to demand his assistance, to accomplish a scheme which she had just conceived.

“ Surely, Madam,” said Bangrove, (the first compliments being over,) “ surely you are the most extraordinary young lady that ever lived!”

“ How so, Sir?” said Louisa.

“ Why, Madam, I was quite petrified to hear from Sir Charles Roseville, of the step you had taken; however, as most probably you already repent of it, I tell you for your comfort, that your letter binds you to nothing; the law not allowing the rash acts of minors to be valid; and, as I hope, when this romantic fit of generosity is over, you will feel your imprudence, I will engage to set every thing to rights.”

“ What an opinion you have of me!” cried Louisa, “ and what a notion you give of your own

own sentiments! do you suppose any of your chicanery should tempt me to swerve from my word? no, Sir; in spite of all the law in the world, my renunciation of all claim to Sir Edward Roseville's estate, shall remain firm and unshaken."

"God bless me, Madam; but you are not perhaps apprized, that Sir Charles never could make good any claim to it. Your mother living in Sir Edward's house at the time of your birth, the law will always consider you as his child, nor could his will be set aside: therefore, you need be under no apprehensions; Sir Charles has no more right to this estate than I have."

"I am under no apprehensions;" said Louisa, "nor do I know that Sir Charles would think of contesting this matter with me. But *equity*, and not *law*, is my rule of conduct: however, this is not a subject I wish to enter upon with you; and if you have no particular business with me, I have some with you. Will you do me a favour?"

"A favour! Good God! Madam! why, really I know not what to say—to be sure, I am the most unlucky man in the world; but you take me quite at a nonplus, and at present it would be highly inconvenient to me to sell out. If a small matter indeed——."

"O make yourself easy," interrupted Louisa, "I have no designs upon your purse; were I in
want

want of money, Mr. Bangrove is not the person I should apply to.

The service I require of you, is of a very different nature ; I want to find some creditable place, where I may be concealed for a few days, till I can settle myself to my mind. Have you any female acquaintance, who could receive me ?”

Bangrove, much relieved, to find a pecuniary demand, was out of the question, but exceedingly amazed at Louisa’s request, rose from his chair, and adjusting his ruffles, exclaimed,

“ Lord, Madam ! you astonish me more and more every minute ! why should a young lady, like you, wish to be concealed ? I crave pardon ; but really I can see no reason whatever, why you should not continue here till you marry.”

“ That will not be in a hurry,” said Louisa, “ forcing a smile.

“ No ! why I thought—but I suppose Lord Danefield is alarmed at your plan of renunciation. Take my word for it, Madam, you had better drop it.”

“ That point is already settled,” said Louisa, gravely. “ Can you, or not, recommend to me such a place as I have described ?”

“ Why, Madam, though to be sure Mr. Melcomb is said to be a gay man among the ladies, yet,

yet, while Mrs. Raby is here, who shall dare to find fault with your living with him?"

"With him!" cried Louisa, "you have a singular style of expression; but to wave that, will you do me the favour I require of you, and give me your word not to discover my retreat."

"To be sure, Madam, if you insist upon it.—I don't know how it is, but I believe no person could refuse any thing you wished; yet, I would fain know your reasons for this extraordinary step."

"Tis not absolutely necessary to give them; but be satisfied, I only wish to be concealed, till my guardian can find a proper retreat for me in the country."

"Well, Madam, I will think about it, and hope, in a few days, or a week——."

"O no, Sir, that will not do; I wish to remove hence to-morrow, or the day after, at farthest."

"Very singular; quite incomprehensible to me. Some little disagreement, I presume, between you and Mrs. Raby?"

"Nothing of the sort ever happened."

"Her brother perhaps—aye, I will lay my life I know what has happened."

"You give yourself infinite trouble, to little
pur-

purpose ;" said Louisa, " had I been disposed to assign a reason, I should have done it at first."

" Well, let me see," said Bangrove, ruminating ; " what I can do—no, that's not the thing—God bless me—I have it. There is Mrs. Fenwick, a widow lady in Queen-street, a very good woman, who has much confidence in me : you would be quite happy with her. I dare say she would receive you. Shall I go and ask her ?"

" By all means."

" O, Madam," cried Bangrove, " I had like to have forgotten, that Sir Charles Roseville desires the honour of seeing you ; and wishes you to appoint some hour, to-day or to-morrow, to receive him, because he is going out of town very soon."

Louisa said, she should be glad to see him that evening at seven o'clock, and desired Bangrove would not delay favouring her with Mrs. Fenwick's answer.

This busy morning being passed, Louisa prepared to attend her friends in the dining parlour, where she had not been since her illness. Her appearance at table, made every eye sparkle with delight. Mrs. Raby said every thing that was kind, to cheer her spirits. Melcomb, indeed, spoke little ; but Louisa suspected he was not the least pleased of the party. His behaviour, ever since she had
left

left Weymouth, had been more than friendly ; and that day, there was a degree of satisfaction in his countenance, and of gallantry in his attentions, which made her suspect he had formed some hopes on her rejection of Lord Danefield, that he had not dared to indulge before.

Doctor Sandolph, who was of the party, amidst his joy on her recovery, could not forbear sometimes shaking his head at her, with a significant glance, which she understood well enough to allude to her conduct, both in regard to Sir Charles Roseville, and Lord Danefield.

The latter she endeavoured to drive from her thoughts, and to assume a composed air, but the task was beyond her strength ; the internal agitation she suffered, appeared on her countenance : and soon after dinner, having taken an opportunity of assuring Melcomb and his sister, how greatly she thought herself obliged to them for all the kindness they had shewn her, secretly meaning it as a farewell compliment, she retired with Doctor Sandolph.

To him she declared her intention of boarding somewhere in the country, as neither her finances, nor her inclination, would permit her to remain in London ; and asked if he thought he could prevail upon his sister to receive her at least till she came of age, which would be in about ten months ;

as

as it would be comfortable to her, to be under the protection of one of his family.

Doctor Sandolph said, he could not answer for his sister, who though a good woman in the main, was, as he had before hinted, rather unamiable in her temper; but if that were not the case, her retired way of life in a remote part of England, must (he presumed) be very disagreeable to a young person; and in his opinion she never could be so eligibly situated as with Mrs. Raby, who he was certain would be delighted with her company; and that Mr. Melcomb had actually desired him to use his influence with her, to prevail upon her to live with them. In regard to money matters, he begged she would give herself no concern about them; for if she persisted in the scheme, which he should ever reprobate, her friends would settle what remained of her fortune, in the best manner they could for her.

Though Louisa could have wished Mrs. Gillsby, (Doctor Sandolph's sister) to have been a woman likely to engage her affections, yet neither her ill temper, nor the remoteness of her situation, nor her retired way of life, deterred her in the least from wishing to bring this scheme to bear. The first objection, she hoped partly to remove by her patience and gentleness; the others were not considered as such; they were recommendations to her, who longed for quiet and solitude

tude; besides too, as her principal inducement to quit London was, to avoid an object she could not see without endangering her own fortitude, how could this be accomplished so effectually as in the very situation, he described? Therefore, she urged him strenuously at least, to sound Mrs. Gillinsby on the subject, saying, she had insurmountable objections to live in Mr. Melcomb's house; and added, that though she would not refuse to remain in Doctor Sandolph's debt, (whom she considered as a father) however distant her chance was, of being enabled to pay him; yet she must insist upon her friends not attempting further exertions in her favour, as she should feel mortified and disobliged by them. Besides too, she was certain she said, that her jewels would fetch sufficient to maintain her very tolerably, with the interest of the residue of her little fortune; and that as she should only keep Marianne, her expences after paying her board, (which she should wish to do liberally where ever she fixed) would be very trifling.

Doctor Sandolph had listened to her with evident reluctance; he seemed extremely averse to her scheme of retirement; for while she continued in town, he thought Lord Danefield had a chance of success; and that young man had entirely won the Doctor's heart. He could indeed have wished, that either one or the other had been somewhat richer;

richer ; but it was his earnest desire in Louisa's perplexed situation, to see her established for life ; and where there was so much love and virtue on both sides, he thought their union could not be otherwise than happy.

Therefore, he again tried to dissuade her from quitting her friends. But Louisa conjured him not to urge her further ; and now she saw, that the immediate removal she projected, was more than ever to be desired ; as besides Doctor Sandolph's importunities, she must expect to encounter those of her other friends, and perhaps be daily exposed to meet with a pleader still more irresistible.

At length Doctor Sandolph promised to write to his sister, well knowing he said with an air of chagrin, Louisa's inflexibility, which poor Lord Danefield experienced to his cost.

" Ah ! my dear Sir ;" cried Louisa, with her eyes full of tears, " call me not inflexible ; but rather assist in strengthening my resolution to adhere to the dictates of reason, and not to listen to those of passion."

She felt grieved that she durst not communicate to him her intention of secretly quitting the family, being sensible how vehemently he would oppose it : but she thought when the thing was done, it would not be very difficult to make him admit of her excuses.

The

The good old man's countenance, generally so benignant, was at this time clouded with vexation ; however, she would not let him go, till he had affectionately folded her to his breast, and assured her that he loved her as his child.

He had not long been gone, before Sir Charles Roseville was announced ; he approached her with an air of unusual respect, and after congratulating her on the recovery of her health, he said : " I know not, Madam, what to say in regard to the letter I have had the honour of receiving from you : a mind capable of acting in the manner you have done, would almost construe thanks into an insult. For though you think 'tis no more than justice that you mean to execute, how few, how very few, in the like circumstances, would think themselves obliged to do that !"

Louisa bowed, and Sir Charles continued,

" It was reserved for you, to extirpate prejudices of all kinds from my mind, therefore permit me, while I express my unfeigned admiration of your character, to give you a proof how sensibly I feel your worth ; nor think my proposition too abrupt, for I would not offend your delicacy for the world. It is, to request not only in my own name, but in that of my son's, that you will honour the name of Roseville, by accepting it from him : Cherrydale then will still belong to you, and I may say
5
your

your virtue will not be unrewarded, for a better young man does not live than Charles."

Louisa, though extremely surprized at this proposition, did not hesitate in her answer."

"You do me justice, Sir," said she, "in believing that I do not require thanks; and I own I am flattered, that *you* find me not unworthy of the name of Roseville. Your bearing it, first made me esteem it; but I must decline the honour you propose. Mr. Roseville (whose merit I do not doubt) and myself, are strangers to each other; but granting that we might mutually find motives of esteem when we became acquainted, there would still remain an invincible obstacle to our union."

"Name it, Madam; perhaps it may be less so than you imagine."

"No, Sir; it is fixed here;" laying her hand on her heart, "and here it will ever remain"

"You have then an attachment?"

"I am not ashamed to own it; at the same time I must tell you, that probably I am destined to a single life."

"O impossible—*You* would not have formed an attachment where a return was improbable, or improper; and whoever receives your hand, will be blessed indeed! I wish my son could have been that man; but since that cannot be, we must consult what can be done in regard to Cherry-dale.

You

You have generously, and guided solely by the equity of your own mind, disallowed your claim to it, and acknowledged mine. But, after having so many years thought yourself the lawful owner, I cannot consent to dispossess you on any other condition, than your retaining all that has accumulated from it, since Sir Edward's death; and as I understand the small legacy my aunt left you, is much impaired by your kindness to your mother, let me have the pleasure of presenting you five thousand pounds, as a trifling memorial of the esteem and respect I bear you."

"Pardon me, Sir Charles," cried Louisa, "I cannot consent to receive any gift that might appear like a compensation; and yet I do assure you, there is scarcely any person, to whom I would sooner owe an obligation than yourself, whose character I highly revere."

"And yet you mortify me with refusing all my propositions; let me entreat you——"

"Do not attempt it," interrupted Louisa, earnestly; "I have a spirit ill adapted to support such obligations; they would be quite oppressive, since I never could hope to return them: but in more trifling concerns, I will consent to be obliged to you. You probably would prefer the family jewels, to all others; they are in my possession;
and

and the highest price at which they may be estimated by the jewellers, I will accept from you."

"With all my heart," said Sir Charles, "provided you retain the arrears of the estate. Those I positively will never touch."

"You will think better of this, I hope," returned Louisa; "no donation of mine, I believe, will be valid before next August—but the jewels I wish to part with immediately—Doctor Sandolph shall deliver them to you."

"He and I," said Sir Charles, "will settle that business between us; and I hope he will prevail upon you, to accede to my wishes as to the rest. Adieu, Madam; the more I know you, the more I regret I am not to have the happiness of calling you daughter; yet I must say my son merits an undivided heart. May I have the honour of calling upon you again before I leave town?"

"I fear, Sir, I shall not be able to see you. I am going, I believe, myself, into the country. However, think of me, Sir Charles, sometimes, as a person who takes a sincere interest in your welfare; and let Mr. Roseville be assured, that I think highly of him, as well as his father, since at this juncture, when the disgrace of my birth might lower me in the opinion of ordinary minds, you both have shewn the superiority of yours, by ho-

nouring me with the most flattering proofs of esteem."

Every word Louisa spoke, raised her in the opinion of Sir Charles; his eyes even glistened with tears, and with an air of tender respect, he pressed her hand to his lips, and then took his leave.

Louisa, completely fatigued both in body and mind, made an apology to Mrs. Raby for declining all conversation that evening, and early retired to rest.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EARLY in the morning following, Louisa received a note from Bangrove, to inform her, that his friend Mrs. Fenwick, would with pleasure admit her any time that suited her, in the course of the next day. Louisa, therefore, communicated to Marianne, her intention of secretly departing from Hill-street, and desired she would take an opportunity of conveying to Mrs. Fenwick's, unobserved by Mrs. Raby's servants, a small bundle of linen; the rest of her clothes, her books, and music, she said, might remain in their present situation, 'till she knew where she should finally fix.

Soon after she had made this arrangement, she heard that Lord Danefield was below, and upon her declining to go down on account of business, Mrs. Raby herself came up to entreat she would not persevere in such cruelty. Louisa, in great agitation, conjured her to desist from such distressing importunity, and desired her to tell Lord Danefield, that he should hear from her very shortly; though she would not promise that her letter should communicate the intelligence he might wish.

She had suffered too severely during their last interview, not to be very desirous of avoiding

another: when alone, she could (though with many a heavy sigh) reason herself into fortitude; but she was sensible that this, had already been weakened by Lord Danefield's tenderness, and that to expose it again to his seducing eloquence, would endanger its forsaking her entirely.

Mr. Melcomb little thinking Louisa's departure was so near, went out that day to dinner; and left his sister and her to dine *tête-à-tête*.

Mrs. Raby took this opportunity to press her strongly to give up her scheme of living in the country, and to reside altogether with her and her brother, who had commissioned her to use every argument likely to prevail upon her friend.

"You would really be doing a very meritorious act to continue with us," said Mrs. Raby, "for already I perceive the softness of your manners, has had a happy effect on those of Melcomb; he seems no longer desirous of running after Ward and Humphries, or of associating entirely with men; and in a short time, he would find himself pleased with such company as we ourselves could mix with."

Louisa in reply, assured her that she esteemed Mr. Melcomb sincerely, and loved her as a sister; but that it was absolutely necessary she should pass some time in retirement, where she might have leisure to adapt her mind to her change of situation,
and

and not be liable to conflicts, which would deeply affect her peace.

“ But think my dear Louisa,” cried Mrs. Raby, “ what your feelings will be amidst strangers ; not one sympathizing heart near you ! Who shall then watch over you, and prevent your brooding over grief ? And though you may feel perhaps less than most people would, the renunciation you have made of fortune, yet that of the first, and dearest inclination of your heart ; ah ! believe me, Louisa, you will long feel that ! Your spirits at present are exalted to an enthusiastic pitch ; and if it were the fashion now, as in ancient times, to strive for the glory of martyrdom, I dare say you would be one of the first to burn, to shew your zeal. But in these days, when people content themselves with attaining milder virtues, why should you aim at more ? Your intention of giving up an estate, that is legally yours, in my opinion is most unnecessary SELF-DENIAL ; but *outré* as that action is, 'tis nothing compared to your cruel rejection of the most amiable man in the world. By this, you at once destroy your own, and his happiness ; you will go and pine in some desert, and he will wander about the world forlorn and miserable.”

“ I see, my dear, Emily,” returned Louisa, “ that you wish to persuade me that you suspect

pride, and ostentation of self-denial, to be the secret motives that actuate me. I will not complain of your injustice, because I know you disguise your real sentiments. Anxious for my happiness, warmly attached to your relation, and desirous of keeping me with you, you would fain persuade me that my union with him, would promote our mutual felicity. But there you are mistaken. 'Tis true, that at first we should probably be so happy to have overcome all obstacles, and to know that nothing could separate us; that we should set prudence at defiance. But be assured that as our attachment would, perhaps, become still more tender, we should more poignantly feel the inconveniences we had drawn upon each other. 'Tis not in real life as in romance, where love is supposed to supply for every other deficiency. Could we view the interior of one of those *ménages* formed on the plan of bread and cheese in a cottage, I suspect we should frequently find more discontent than love; and assuredly scenes of distress, sufficient to deter the most romantic disposition from plunging into them. A man so very young as Lord Danefield, of a profession too that requires a full flow of spirits, would be lost to himself and society, at his first entrance into life—Unable to appear in the world in the style suitable to his birth, he would sink with
the

the unhappy object whose fatal tendernefs had been his bane, into obscurity. All his noble ambition damped, he must be content to vegetate ; if however the galling pressure of distressed circumstances, would permit his falling into such a torpid state. No, Emily ; my ideas of love are very different. A passion which seeks only temporary gratifications, is not *that* I feel for Lord Danefield. Yet, think me not insensible, ah ! no ; (wiping away a starting tear) my heart feels for him, more than language can express. Nor take it amiss, my dear Emily, that I refuse the generous asylum, which you, and Mr. Melcomb offer me. The tumult of London would be insupportable to me at present."

"Your notions," said Mrs. Raby, "may be very just, but I believe few people who are in love, are disposed to reason thus. If you would continue with me, you should pass as much of your time in retirement as you chose ; I would exactly do what you wished in every respect ; and I am much mistaken," continued she with an arch smile, "if you could not mould Melcomb's heart and soul, as you pleased."

"Ah Emily !" cried Louisa, "you are very impolitic ; for the bare suspicion of what you insinuate, had I no other objection, would suffice, to determine me not to continue Melcomb's guest :

for if I cannot marry Lord Danefield, I never will any other man."

The two friends then separated, and neither of them in the course of the evening, seemed disposed to renew the subjects they had already discussed.

Louisa's mind full of her intended removal, and pained, thus clandestinely to quit her amiable friend, was too much agitated to permit her to sleep. She arose early, as she wished to write to Mrs Raby, and Doctor Sandolph; the former, she entreated to pardon her abrupt departure, explaining her motive to be a strong desire to remove out of Lord Danefield's knowledge; and after making her acknowledgments to him and Melcomb for their kindness to her, she concluded, with promising to write to them as soon as she had settled in the country; and enclosed a few lines for Lord Danefield, expressive of unalterable esteem, and hearty wishes for his health and happiness; but at the same time she besought him not to be offended at her resolution, of persisting in those sentiments she had declared to him, at their last interview; and she added, that for their mutual peace of mind, it was necessary they should meet no more.

Doctor Sandolph, she addressed as follows :

“ MY DEAR SIR,

SENSIBLE of my own weakness, and that I am far from possessing that inflexibility of temper which you suppose, I have judged it prudent to withdraw myself from my friends. My place of retirement is such, I hope, as you yourself could not disapprove, and I shall remain in it no longer than 'till you have received Mrs. Gillinsby's answer: if she is kindly disposed to receive me, I shall hasten to her, but not without seeing the friend in the world whom I respect the most. If you will be so good to communicate Mrs. Gillinsby's answer to Mr. Bangrove, he will inform me of it.

Pardon, my dear Sir, whatever may appear irregular in my conduct; and be assured it has only been influenced by the dread, almost amounting to certainty, of being exposed to fresh trials, that perhaps might have rendered it impossible for me to persevere in a refusal, which however, justified by reason, costs me more than you can imagine, or I express.

Add not to my other vexations, your displeasure; *that* would totally overcome me. Consider me as a helpless orphan, whose only comfort on earth is
your

your paternal love and protection. To deserve these throughout life, will be the constant study of

Dear Sir,

Your grateful, and obliged child,

LOUISA."

These letters she committed to Mariannes care, charging her not to have them delivered, 'till she had been gone some hours; and after recommending her to remain in Hill-street, seemingly ignorant whither she was gone, she told her to order a chair to be got immediately, that she might slip out, before Mrs. Raby was up. This was accordingly done; and though the servants seemed rather surprized at her going out thus early, they concluded, that it was occasioned by some pressing business, relative to her deceased mother, especially as they heard her order the chairman to go to Holborn-hill;—but she had not proceeded far, before she directed them to Lincoln's Inn, where she dismissed them: and meeting Bangrove, who was on the watch for her, she desired him to conduct her to his friend's house. The chairmen, after asking if they should call any where to carry her home, being answered in the negative, retired; and Bangrove lending her his arm (for she could scarcely support herself) they walked till they came to a stand

stand of coaches, one of which conveyed them to Mrs. Fenwick's.

During the way he told Louisa, how much Sir Charles Roseville admired her behaviour; at the same time that he lamented her rejection of his son.

" You don't know, Madam, what you refuse," added he; " Mr. Roseville is a very good young gentleman, and he will have a most noble fortune. Indeed it was always the match I had in my eye for you; but you flung cold water upon it; and there was a time when Sir Charles was equally averse to it: but now he and his son are willing, and it would be just the thing to settle affairs handsomely between you; therefore I wish you would consent to it, otherwise you may live to repent having been so extremely fastidious."

Louisa begged he would have no uneasiness upon her account, as the single state, was what she preferred.

" Lord, Madam! I thought you had been a lady of more veracity; can you suppose me such a fool as to believe you? What, out of mere perverseness, when so many people are dying for you, you resolve to disappoint them all—No, no; you are too pretty to remain single."

Their arrival at Mrs. Fenwick's put an end to this

this conversation. Bangrove presented Louisa to his friend, strongly recommending to her, that she might be allowed all the privacy she desired; and then he hurried away to Westminster Hall.

Mrs. Fenwick was a jolly looking woman; vulgar to excess, yet fancying herself extremely polite; apparently good humoured, and exceedingly talkative.

On the stairs she screamed out to her maid Martha to bring breakfast.

"Dear me, Ma'am," said she, "I am quite discomposed that such a lady as you, should find me without a man servant; but indeed, I was forced to part with John; for you know, Ma'am, nothing is so shocking to a person of delicacy, as vulgar manners; and I never could teach John, what it was to be genteel."

Mrs. Fenwick then bustled about, to get her tea equipage in order; and after waiting a considerable time, they sat down to breakfast. Louisa had little appetite to eat, and was not at all inclined to comply with Mrs. Fenwick's teasing entreaties, to taste a bit of every thing upon the table. She wished much to escape to the chamber allotted to her; but Mrs. Fenwick was so delighted to have a person to talk to, who never attempted to interrupt her, that she would not part with her, saying, she was very sure it would be melancholy for her

her

her to be alone ; and that she would, with all the pleasure in the world, keep her company.

Louisa, after thanking her for her good will, declined giving her so much trouble ; and begged she would not take it amiss, if she passed the chief part of her time in her chamber, as she was in a very indifferent state of health ; and, she earnestly desired that no person whatever might see her, or hear of her being at her house.

“ Very well, Ma’am ; you may depend upon my secrecy,” said Mrs. Fenwick ; “ I am very close, and defy any body to get any thing out of me.”

Mrs. Fenwick now shewed Louisa her chamber : she would have been better pleased had it not looked upon the street, and if the windows had not been so low ; however, in such an obscure part of the town, she hoped she might escape observation.

The morning did not pass as quietly as she could have wished ; Mrs. Fenwick, or her maid, fidgetted backwards and forwards into her apartment, out of their abundant civility, always imagining she wanted something.

Mrs. Fenwick had prepared a very plentiful dinner, and was half affronted that Louisa did so little honour to it ; in vain she assured her, that she was but just recovering from a severe fit of
ill-

illness; and that one simple thing, was all she durst touch. Mrs. Fenwick kept lamenting, that she had not been able to please her taste; and asked her a thousand questions as to what food she preferred. In the evening, that she might not be obliged either to listen to Mrs. Fenwick, or to talk herself, she proposed playing at back-gammon, and early retired to rest.

The next morning, after breakfast, as Louisa went to her window to let down the curtain, the sun being troublesome, the first object that struck her eye, was Lord Pompoultou, in earnest conversation with a coach-maker over the way, but with his eyes fixed on Mrs. Fenwick's house. After all she had suffered from this man, 'tis not surprizing that she suspected he had discovered her retreat, and perhaps was machinating to get her again into his power.

Though she had already cautioned Mrs. Fenwick, not to admit a creature that might ask for her, she judged it proper to lecture her afresh; but upon enquiry, she found she was gone out; and when she returned to her chamber, and peeped behind the curtain to see what was become of her persecutor, he was no longer to be seen.

But still she could not help being uneasy. Presently after she heard a double rap at the door, and flying to the stairs to listen, she was somewhat reassured,

assured, at only hearing Mrs. Fenwick's voice. Louisa instantly went down to renew her caution, and met Mrs. Fenwick coming to her. She seemed in a hurry to communicate something; and Louisa, whose thoughts ran entirely upon Lord Pom-poufton, turned pale, and trembled, concluding it was about him.

"Well, Ma'am, now you shall see, whether I am not a fit person to be trusted;" cried she, "but sit down. La! I am so out of breath, I shall not be able to speak this hour—but you shall hear all about it." 1

"About what, Madam?" cried Louisa, all impatience.

"You shall hear—you must know, Ma'am, that my cousin Warner, who is lying-in (poor soul! she had a sad time) wished to see me; and so I thought I would treat Chloe with a walk; dogs in London, do nothing but eat and sleep, and get so fat, they can hardly waddle along; and so as I passed by Miss Tiffing's door, I thought I would just step in to rest Chloe, and then go on to my cousin Warner; I believe I might sit about half an hour with Miss Tiffing, and——." 1

"Well, Madam," interrupted Louisa, who apprehended this story was endless; "but what did you hear, in which I am interested?"

"I shall come to that part presently. Well,
I wen

I went and paid my visit to my poor cousin; she has been ill managed, I fear."

"I am sorry for it," cried Louisa; "but I am in such a flurry, I wish you would come at once to the point in question."

"So, after staying a reasonable time with my cousin, I returned home; and just as I got to my own door, and went to knock, bounce runs I against a gentleman; he drew back, and began apologizing, and so I courtesied; and so he said, with a smile, "may I take the liberty," says he, "of asking, if you have not got a young lady with you?"

Louisa started; and Mrs. Fenwick, without observing it, continued.

"A young lady, Sir!" says I, and I smiled, and so you are come to pump me, are you? but believe me you have met with your match; you will get nothing out of me, I promise you, says I."

"That I perceive, Madam," says he; "but you would oblige me very much, if you would give your friend, Miss Roseville, this letter." And he held one in his hand. "No, that I won't, says I; and then I protested I knew of no such person, and that I thought it very unhandsome of him to skulk about people's houses, and the door being opened, I shut it in his face."

"Is this gentleman very tall?" asked Louisa,

not

not quite so well satisfied with Mrs. Fenwick's prudence, as she was herself.

"No, not very tall, but a very comely gentleman."

"Are his eyes round and black?"

"Lord bless me, I can't say what colour his eyes are. I suppose he is some sweetheart of yours; and now I'll lay my life, you are sorry I did not take his letter."

Louisa assured her of the contrary, and re-iterated her request, that she would deny her to every body.

Prepossessed that this comely gentleman could be no other than Lord Pompoultou, she began to repent having thrown herself out of her friend's protection. This step now, seemed to her rash and unnecessary, as she might have confined herself to her chamber, for the little while she had probably to remain with Mrs. Raby, and thus have avoided Lord Danefield, though not her friend's importunities.

If it had not been for the fear of appearing capricious, she would perhaps have returned to Hill-street; however, she considered, that since the thing was done, and with a good motive, it was better now to remain quiet in her present situation 'till Mrs. Gillinsby's answer came, which must be in a few days. But the detested image of Lord Pompoultou,

poufton haunted her all the night ; at laft, towards morning, exhausted for want of fleep, her eyes infenfibly clofed, and fhe did not wake 'till fummoned to breakfast.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.